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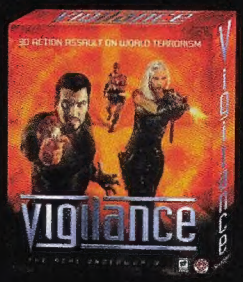

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  The Return of Forge!
- ☐ **Iron Man #12**
  Against the all-new War Machine!
- ☐ **Iron Man/Captain America '98**
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  A transfusion of Spider-Man's blood creates a new villain!
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  The Return of Skids!

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  "The Hunt For Xavier" Part 5!
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  Flight of the Four Horsemen of Apocalypse!

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■ Green fog cripples city. Local hero, Superman is still nowhere to be found.
By LOIS LANE
Daily Planet Staff Writer
METROPOLIS — Practically para-
zing pedestrians, closing businesses
d bringing police and emergency
ices to a halt, the mysterious
ghost" is smothering a panicky
nder a blanket of fear and
to an unconfirmed report
R. Labs employee, the
traces of the element
the only material
amazing powers
ins are uncer-
ion is once
etropolis-
LexCorp
is one of a handful of companies in the world with the technological know-how and funding to obtain the rare Kryptonite in quantities this large.
At City Hall the rumor mill runs unchecked. LexCorp CEO, Lex Luthor, long known for his quiet disdain of Superman, has been linked to, and seen in the company of, inter-stellar criminal heavyweight Brainiac. It is thought that together they may hold the clues to the fog's mysterious appearance.
"Superman's absence during the crisis only lends credence to the Kryptonite fog theory. What does this mean for the future of Metropolis?"
Meanwhile, everyone from radio disc-jockeys to little old ladies have called for Superman to make an appearance. Here's what long-time Metropolis resident Emma Anderson, age 78, had to say. "I've lived in Metropolis over 50 years, and you can always count on Superman. I just know he'll show up."
—cont. page 8
Metropolis wonders where is Superman?
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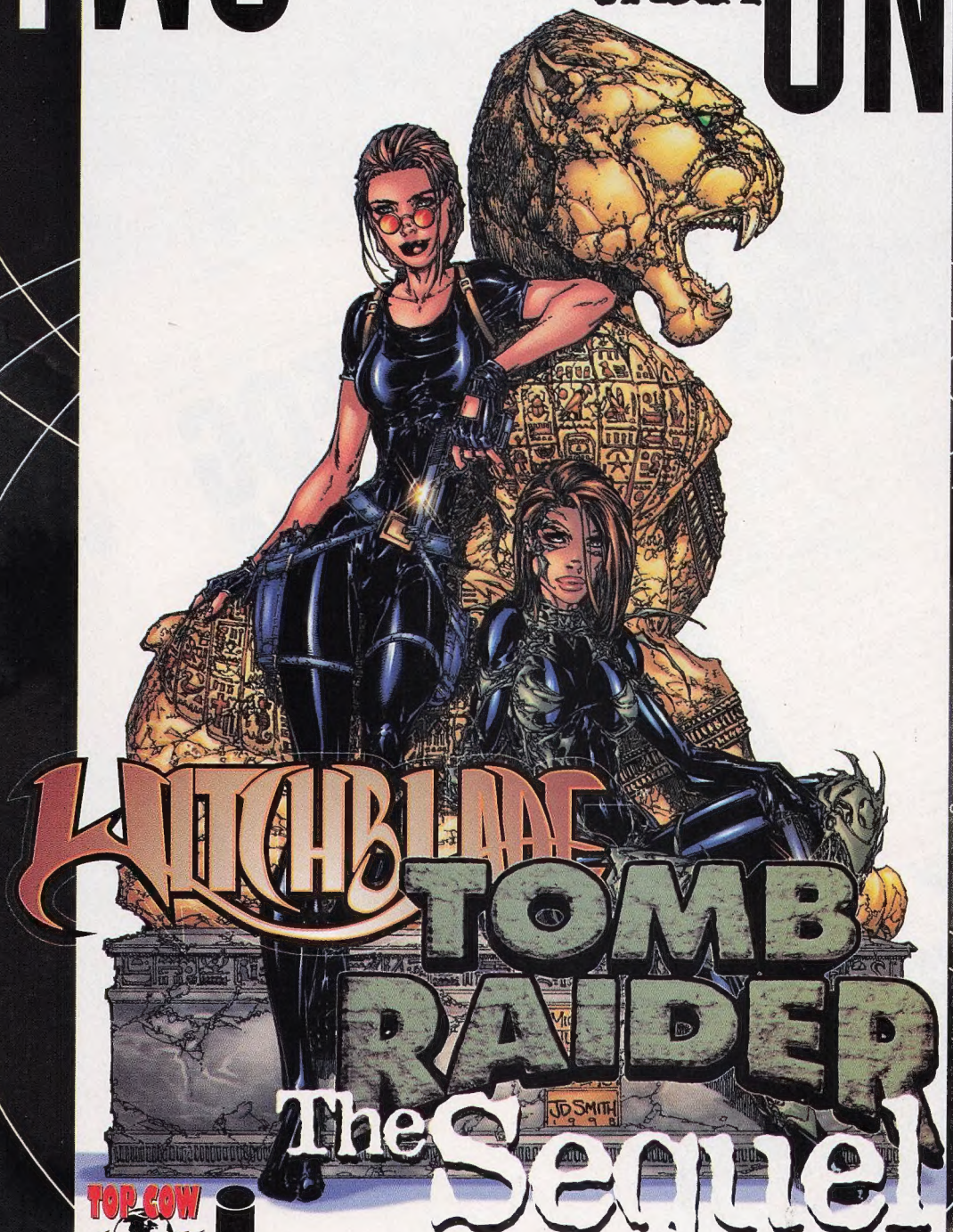

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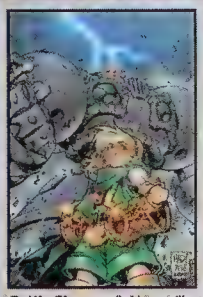

Battle Chasers (left) was illustrated by Joe Madureira and Tom McWeeney, and colored by Liquid Graphics. Chase your way to **page 38** to check out Joe's studio and see what's in store for your favorite fantasy characters. **Joker/Doom** was illustrated by Jim Calafiore, and colored by Liquid Graphics. Shrink to **page 60**, to see what a real doc has to say about comics' kookiest villains.

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Jumble some words and walk away with a signed prototype of Randy Bowen's kick-ass Daredevil statue, an original page of *DD* art by Joe Quesada and a horde of Marvel Knights comics.

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COOL STUFF THROUGH THE MAIL

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TALES OF THE DARKNESS #1/2

Lights out! Here's your only chance to get the exclusive *Tales of the Darkness* #1/2 comic featuring a future tale of Jackie Estacado's baddest, most evilest relative, by Malachy Coney and Cedric Nocon! Embrace the darkness on **page 80.**

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PUBLISHER'S LETTER

"WHOA, *WHOA!* YOU WOULDN'T HIT A GUY WITH GLASSES--*OOF!*"

DC BUYS JIM LEE

Jim Lee's WildStorm Productions is in the process of being bought by DC Comics—it happened so fast, I didn't get a chance to write about it last month. This is a great move for everyone involved, especially fans. Jim Lee will get a chance to focus again on creating the best possible comics. Over the last few years many creators have put themselves in the position of running companies *and* trying to create comics. It's hard. Now, with Jim's complete focus on the comics, I think we're going to see more great work coming out from him and his fellow creators. DC will also benefit greatly from the acquisition. In addition to the characters, DC gets full access to both Jim Lee and his ability to attract other very talented creators. How great will it be to see Jim working on a Batman or Supes title? Or doing covers for the JLA? You could just let your imagination run wild all day—I'm sure it already is. That's why this is great for you: It brings back to mind those times we would just sit around and think, "wouldn't it be great if this artist worked on this book or that book." Well, those times are back! DC, Jim—we're all excited for you and can't wait for you to get started.

Speaking of wishing for certain creators on certain titles, did you see Kevin Smith with Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti on *Daredevil*? I guess I wished hard enough; great job guys!

Anyway, this month we've got some great stuff. First, come along as we check out what's going on with Spider-Man. Marvel's relaunching everybody's favorite web-slinger, and we've got the low-down. That's not all we're investigating, though. We wondered how hot artist Joe Madureira creates such great stuff, so we decided to find out. Take a look at what's lying around his office. We could've had a psychologist analyze Joe, but we thought it might be more fun to peer into the minds of some supervillains.

We're just getting warmed up. We talk with the man redefining some classic superheroes for today's audiences, Paul Dini, one of the geniuses behind the animated Batman and Superman TV shows. We'll also check in with *Catwoman* writer Devin K. Grayson and tell you everything you need to know about the latest Japanese craze to hit America, Pokémon.

That's enough from me. See ya!

Gareb

P.S. Next month make sure you pick up *Wizard*—a Jim Lee-drawn Batman will grace the cover kicking off his DC stint. And while you're waiting for that, make sure you visit our Web site at WizardWorld.com.

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FAKE ID SCAMS... THE HEAD OF MODOK... ...AND JOE MAD'S MONEY!

Know what I like about "Magic Words"? I mean, other than the droves of letters-page groupies always hanging 'round the *Wizard* stage door just waiting for a piece of me? It's the little bits o' personality. Wanna get just a teeny bit closer to the mind of *Captain America* writer Mark Waid? How 'bout *Battle Chasers*' Joe Madureira? You can do just that, right here, this month.

You can also locate libraries where you can read free comics, and find out what 1,000 monkeys with art supplies can do. Really. Just read on.

Dear Wizard,

In response to Adele Puccio's letter in *Wizard* #85: Many libraries collect comic books and electronic comic fanzines. You can find a full listing in *Fandom Directory 1998-99*. Here's how to contact the appropriate people:

Fan Data Publications
7614 Cervantes Court
Springfield, VA 22152-3133
(703) 913-5575 (voice or fax)
http://www.fandata.com

The latest *Directory* has 560 pages and lists 32 libraries that collect comic books and comic book e-zines. I use the *Directory* as a definitive resource and would be lost without it. My e-zine is also listed!

Paul Dale Roberts
Publisher, Peoples' Comic Book Newsletter
Silhouet@ix.netcom.com

The *Directory* also contains comic publisher addresses, convention schedules and comic book clubs you can join. At $23.95, it's one-stop geek-fest shopping.

Dear Jim,

I was in Mexico a week ago and bought *Witchblade* #1. But the text is all in Spanish. Is it worth the same as an English-language version?

Rafael Ruiz
Orlando, FL

Yes and no. To most collectors in the United States, it's just a reprint worth a couple of bucks, tops. But to the right *La Witchbladia* fanatic completist, you could probably unload it for big bucks. Good luck. And *vaya con dios.*

Dear Wizard,

Around 1988 or so, Marvel introduced the concept of "The Twelve," 12 mutants who would lead mutantkind into the future. Soooo...who are these "Twelve"?

Joe Wygocki
Lansing, MI

Well, Cyclops is one. We know 'cause he got this little revelation when the concept of "The Twelve" was introduced in *X-Factor* #14. And we know Franklin Richards, Apocalypse and Storm are, too. The rest? Mark Powers, who edits the mutant titles, says they'll be revealed in 1999. And *Cable*

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BUNNY AWARD

LETTER OF OF THE MONTH

Jim takes his favorite letter and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this, nor is there a prize.

Dear Mighty Jim,

I have a few questions.

1) What is the *Wizard* Bunny's name?
2) Is it a male or a female?
3) How old is it?
4) Has it ever come after you?
5) Does it like pie?

Brian Staffeld
Neenah, WI

I, of course, have a few answers.

1) Much like Clint Eastwood in those cool old "spaghetti westerns," the *Wizard* Bunny has no name. He is simply "the Bunny."

2) Hmmm. I just called him a "he." To my knowledge, no one has ever checked the appropriate spots under the fur, but the Bunny has been seen to choke Todd McFarlane, and dance with and hit on women. All could be categorized as male traits, particularly choking McFarlane. So I'd guess he's a he.

3) Old enough to know better, but still too young to care.

4) Nah. Me and the Bunny are good pals.

5) Damn straight! Everybody likes pie. And every bunny.

Dear Jim,

I was watching "120 Minutes" on MTV the other day, and Monster Magnet (one of the coolest rock bands around) was on. Dave Wyndorf, the lead singer, said the highlight of his life was being in a Frank Miller comic. So what comic was it?

Also, on one of their songs, Monster Magnet seems to say, "Now what would MODOK do/If his memory got too full?" Are these guys comic geeks or something?

Nathan VanderBeek
nvanderb@csulb.edu

Well, I got Dave Wyndorf on the horn and he says, "I am absolutely a comic geek, although the rest of the guys in the band really aren't. I'm a huge Silver Age fan, and I also like a lot of stuff from what I consider the 'rebirth of comics' in the early to mid-'80s. The coolest thing I've read recently is Frank Miller's *300* mini-series from Dark Horse Comics."

As to the Wyndorf comic appearance, it was *Amazing Spider-Man Annual* #14. Seems Wyndorf was playing in a band called Shrapnel at the time, and Miller was good buddies with the boys in the band. So he drew a scene where Peter Parker went to CBGB, a legendary Manhattan rock club. Shrapnel was on stage, playing a song called "Combat Love."

And yes, that is MODOK; Marvel's big-headed Mental Organism Designed Only for Killing is mentioned on the single "Baby Götterdämerung" off of Monster Magnet's latest album, *Powertrip*. And if ya dig that, ya might wanna check out "Ego, the Living Planet," a song named for Marvel's...uh...living planet, I guess. It's on MM's previous release, *Dopes to Infinity*.

writer Joe Casey confirms it.

"Only a few people besides me know who the infamous Twelve are...and they're all dead," Casey says. "Powers doesn't want to know, because he's got a lot to live for. So, until *Cable* #73 hits stands in September 1999, you'll just have to get along with the fact that you DON'T know...and that you're still breathing."

Those X-writers. Such power-trippers.

Dear Wizard,

I'm saving money because of you!

In the *Wizard JLA Special* last year, you enclosed a JLA membership card, which I promptly slapped my picture on and laminated. I now use this card as my "student ID" when I go to the movies. Those ticket booth operators are clueless, and I save $2 a flick! If I see a movie a week, that's over $100 saved! Plus, I don't need to go to college to get an ID!

Dennis Culver
mackdenny@aol.com

You think that's cool? You can buy beer with the Avengers ID card enclosed with *Wizard* #76.

Jim,

I have some questions:

1) Is it possible to get original Joe Madureira art anywhere?
2) What's Joe Madureira's salary?
3) Is there any way I can get an autograph from Joe without going to a convention?

Chris Chi
r_y_u@hotmail.com

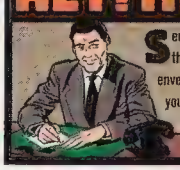
I have some answers. And I got 'em the old-fashioned way: I just asked Joe Madureira.

1) Joe says, "All my work from *Uncanny X-Men* and previous is available through a company called D.O.A.—Distinctive Original Artwork. But my *Battle Chasers* stuff is not for sale. I want to hang onto it for now and I don't know if I'll ever sell it."

Psst! You can call D.O.A. at (301) 782-4052 and see

BUNNY PHOTO: PAUL SCHRADER

HEY! IT'S PEN PALS...



Send your name, address, age, sex and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the "Magic Words" address at the end of this column (put your age on the envelope). The only way to get your Internet address listed instead is to post your info in the Pen Pals board on America Online's "Wizard World" forum (keyword: Wizard; look in the Wizard Bulletin Board, under Message Boards. **Pre-'98 entrants:** Please resend your entries.

what they've got. Tell 'em McLauchlin sent you. Then maybe I'll get a commission.

2) He's having a hard time computing it. "I'm waiting to get my check from *Battle Chasers* #4," Joe says. "Maybe then I'll know. But I do for sure know I make more than that Michael Turner guy."

Whoa! For more on the "friendly" rivalry between Joe Mad and *Fathom* creator Turner, check out next month's *Wizard*.

3) Probably not. "I used to do autographs through the mail, but it got to be too much and I really felt bad when I got behind," he says. "So it looks like cons only, unless I happen to run into you at a McDonalds. Then I'll happily sign your burger."

A Happy Meal, indeed.

Hey Jim!

What is Mark Waid's favorite comic he's worked on?

Mark Mangum
impulse2003@juno.com

Mark likes *Flash* #0, a story he wrote in which Wally West figured out that a mysterious benefactor from his youth was actually a time-traveling version of himself. "It was a very personal, introspective story." Waid says. "But I can't leave out *Impulse* #12. That story had a lot going on, and the ending even surprised me as I wrote it."

So it's a tie, and between two speedsters at that. Good thing Waid's never written *Quicksilver*.

Dear Jim,

I know that laws in comic book physics are somewhat ethereal, but is there an explanation as to how Superman flies? Does he emit anti-gravity particles? Does he have some control over gravity we're not aware of?

Brian Teta
BrianTeta@aol.com

Since Mark Waid's already on the phone and since he's DC King Fanboy Deluxe (He wrote *Who's Who*, fer cryin' out loud!), you'd figger he'd be the guy to know. But Waid takes a different approach. "There is nothing in physics that can explain how Superman flies," Waid says. "John Byrne, when he was writing the books, had some notion that it was psionic. But I think when you start slapping rules on a character to make him scientifically accurate, you take the magic away. So I'll say fairy dust. That's my answer and I'm sticking to it."

Gee, I wonder if Lois Lane knows Supes is a fairy.

Wizard,

I recently read Scott McCloud's excellent book, *Understanding Comics*. On the last page of the book, Mr. McCloud printed his address and

MALIK BAXTER
Age: 17 Sex: Male
633-C Arcadale Dr.
Charlotte, NC 28217
Likes: *Spawn, Iron Man*, anime

RYAN BEGIN
Age: 14 Sex: Male
Box 400
Manitouwadge, Ontario
P0T 2C0, Canada
Likes: X-titles, *Wolverine, Secret Wars*

MICHAEL BURNETT
Age: 15 Sex: Male
4568 Glen St.
Riverside, CA 92503
Likes: Cliffhanger, *X-Men, Generation X*

ANGELA CARDIEL
Age: 16 Sex: Female
8499 New Haven Dr.
El Paso, TX 79907
Likes: *Sailor Moon, Dragonball Z, Ranma 1/2*

SONYA COLE
Age: 16 Sex: Female
104 Tennessee Ave. West
Seffner, FL 33584
Likes: *Sailor Moon*, Image, *Lady Death*

ANTHONY W. COOLEY
Age: 24 Sex: Male
337 Namquid Dr.
Warwick, RI 02888
Likes: X-titles, Top Cow titles, *JLA*

JAMES DOCKRELL
Age: 16 Sex: Male
3344 Studebaker Rd.
Long Beach, CA 90808
Likes: *Journey Into Mystery*, X-titles, *Generation X*

invited people to send in responses to his work. Well, he's since moved. Can you tell me how to contact Mr. McCloud? I'd love to give him the credit he deserves for making me look at comics in a new way.

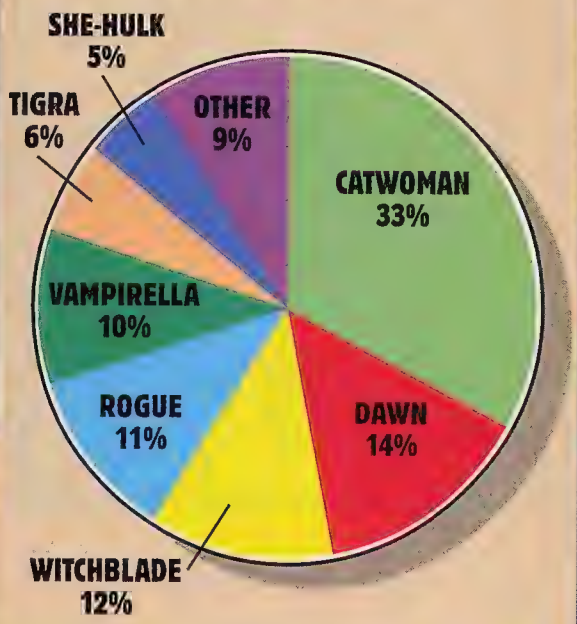
Justin Knapp
Indianapolis, IN

Scott says he's actually moved five or six times since *Understanding Comics* was published in 1993. He'd love for you to give him credit, and will take all you've got to give at: Box 115, Newbury Park, CA 91319. He also says that no matter where he might move in the future, he can always be reached through his Web site (Is it just me or does everyone have one of those things these days?) at scottmccloud.com. Go get 'im.

SURVEY SAYS

ONLINE QUESTION OF THE MONTH

WHO IS THE SEXIEST FEMALE CHARACTER IN COMICS?



Meow! Taking the premise from *Wizard* #83's feature, "Top 10 Sexiest Women," we wanted to get fans' opinions of the sexiest women in all of comicdom! Just as we expected, Catwoman purred her way to the top. "She's sexy, wears skin-tight clothes, is acrobatic and a villainess," posted one fan. "What more could a guy ask for?"

On the other hand, we completely missed the boat on Witchblade and Rogue. Despite not being listed on the original online ballot, fans wrote them in to a No. 3 and No. 4 finish, respectively. What can we say? Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. ■ MATTHEW SENREICH

Hey Jim,

Can you tell me where the names Wolverine, Cable, Robin and Flaming Carrot came from?

Dustin Stevens
AgentD@juno.com

Sure.

Writer Len Wein, who introduced Wolverine in *Incredible Hulk* #180 back in 1974, says, "The name 'Wolverine' was given to me by fellow Marvel staffer Roy Thomas. I was doing Brother Voodoo at the time in *Strange Tales*, and Voodoo was a Jamaican character. Lots of the characters had Jamaican accents. Roy could never do accents, so he came up to me one day and said, 'Do a character, call him Wolverine and make him Canadian. I want to see how you'd do a Canadian accent.' The rest of the character was all me, but the name came from Roy Thomas."

Rob Liefeld, who named Cable in *New Mutants* #87, says, "Bob Harras, the editor, wanted to come up with a leader/teacher character for *New Mutants*. He wanted to call him 'Quinn.' Louise Simonson, who was writing the book, wanted to call him something with an 'X' in it. But we went with 'Cable.' The name just has a good cadence to it."

Meanwhile, Dennis O'Neil, the Batman group editor at DC, will tell ya he's pretty sure that Batman creators Bob Kane and Bill Finger, "had 'Robin Hood' in mind when they created Robin. After that, who knows? I've always thought they were looking for a bright, vibrant name to contrast with the darker Batman."

And creator Bob Burden says, "Flaming Carrot just came to me out of the blue. It sounded like the stupidest name I could think of, so I figured, 'Hey! I'll see if I can run with this.'"

Dear Supernatural Rockin' Galoot,

1) Would you consider hiring a wise-ass teenager to work as your assistant? If so, I'm your man!

2) Do you drink Yoo-Hoo?

3) You are always trashing *Gen13*. Do you actually read the book?

4) Is it me, or is *Witchblade* co-writer Christina Z. a hottie?

5) What comics currently float your boat?

Ryan Hill
pwonder_romeo@yahoo.com

1) I have no assistant. But if you're willing to shine my shoes, wash my car, pit my olives and work for free, I may be interested. Send a résumé.

2) No. Yoo-Hoo is the most vile and putrid substance ever put in a bottle. And this from the guy who has Flyin' Frog Wing Sauce and Pappy's Sassafras Tea in my collection of bizarre food products.

3) Yep. Ever since John Arcudi and Gary Frank took over with #26, I think it's been pretty good.

4) Is it you? I dunno. I've never seen you. Send a

ANDREW HADFIELD
Age: 19 Sex: Male
R.R. #2, Box 9, Site 1
Cap Pele, New Brunswick, Canada
E0A 1J0
Likes: *Batman, Star Wars*, drawing comics

GLEN IVEY
Age: 19 Sex: Male
6261 Clarks Neck Rd.
Washington, NC 27889
Likes: X-titles, *Wolverine*, dragon stuff

KEVIN T. KING
Age: 26 Sex: Male
P.O. Box 9136
Louisville, KY 40209
Likes *Astro City, Avengers, Captain America*

KATHARINE ANNE LAKEPOINT
Age: 17 Sex: Female
7869 S.W. Skyhar Dr.
Portland, OR 97223
Likes: *Batman, Elektra, The Coven*

LEONINI LELIO
Age: 22 Sex: Male
C.S.O. Italia 14
80024 Cardito
Naples, Italy
Likes: X-titles, *JLA, Spawn*

SHAUN "LAWRENCE" MURRAY II
Age: 18 Sex: Male
P.O. Box 830923
Stone Mountain, GA 30083-0016
Likes: *The Darkness*, anime, drawing comics

STEVEN PENROD JR.
Age: 18 Sex: Male
3400 Concord Rd. NF-3A
York, PA 17402
Likes: X-titles, drawing comics, Marvel superheroes

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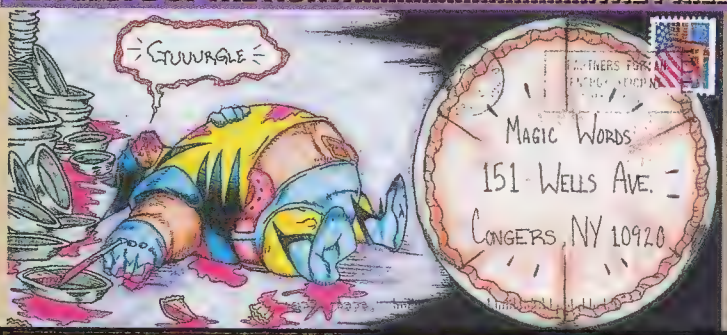
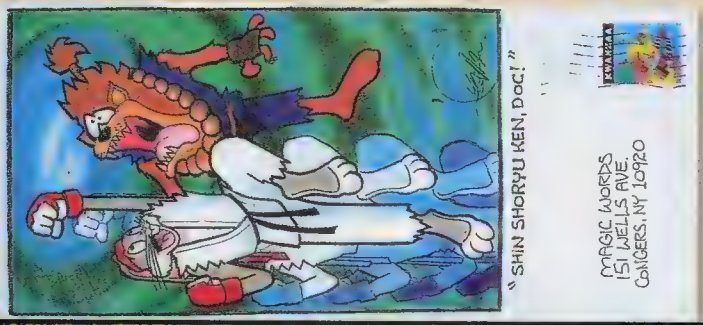
LETTER ART

Each fan who has letter art printed this month will receive a *Madoka* comic signed by Alexander Racine, plus a copy of this issue of *Wizard* signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff! The talented creator of this month's best envelope also scores an original piece of Madoka art. (Prizes provided by Inteleg International Inc.) Artists, please include a clearly printed return address and a list of characters depicted on the back of your envelope. Feng shui!

ENVELOPE OF THE MONTH.....THE PRIZE

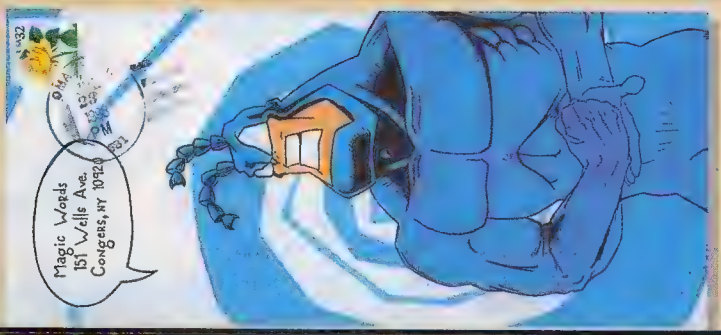


PIE: THE TEMPTRESS Tavarse Newman Ft. Washington, MD



BUGS & TAZ Leonard Griffin Jr. Duncanville, TX

SCUD Nicholas Gurewitch Manchester, NY



THE TICK Joshua Herbolsheimer Omaha, NE

photo with your résumé and I'll tell you. Christina Z.? It's all in the eye of the beholder. So if you think she is, then she is.

5) The two that always go to the top of the pile: David Mack's *Kabuki* and Erik Larsen's *Savage Dragon*. Speaking of which...

Dear Wizard,

It's been said that if you put a thousand monkeys at a thousand typewriters, they'd eventually produce all the works of William Shakespeare. But if you gave a thousand monkeys a thousand sets of art supplies, would they eventually produce all the comics of Erik Larsen?

Craig Powell
Salt Lake City, UT

Maybe. Larsen thinks it's a possibility, but adds, "Only if those monkeys had the exposed brains of a crazed historical dictator sticking out of their heads!"

I think Erik is referring to BrainiApe, a villainous giant monkey with Hitler's brain often seen in the pages of *Savage Dragon*. But, then again, with Erik you can never be sure.

Dear Wizard,

I love my girlfriend!

Tom Jones
tomjones@idirect.com

Yeah, well I love your girlfriend, too. You know, it's not unusual to be loved by someone.

Oh, yeah! Swing it, baby!

That's all. The Tom Jones tunes are crankin' and my time here is done. Thank you! You've been a wonderful audience! Good night! Until next month, I remain...

—Jim McLauchlin

Wizard staff writer Jim McLauchlin does not want to visit you or anyone else on the World Wide Web. So quit asking.

Send letters to:
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Congers, NY 10920
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GREAT X-PECTATIONS

Who will take over the tough job of writing the X-Men?

Comics' most-coveted job is up for grabs. Want a shot to write the X-Men? Now's the time to pitch a proposal.

Since writers Joe Kelly and Steven T. Seagle dropped the bombshell that they were bolting their X-Men writing posts due to creative differences with their editors, the comics industry has been abuzz over potential replacements on the two top-selling titles, *X-Men* and *Uncanny X-Men*.

It seems only natural that comics' top talent would be clamoring for comics' premier jobs.

If only it was that simple.

The greatest gig in comics is not the easiest assignment. The X-editors—led by Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras—dictate philosophy and both Kelly and Seagle cited difficulty putting up with frequent changes imposed upon them as their reason for leaving.

"Sometimes a writer's personal vision doesn't quite fit what the book is," Harras said. "I don't see where 'editorial driven' is a great sin. The public expects certain things and it's the fan's vision we need to cater to. There needs to be a cohesiveness to these books, and cohesiveness means writers working and playing well with others."

So who is steely enough to handle the X-editors and talented enough to wow the fans and guide the X-Men into the new millennium? Alan Davis will step in and plot both X-Men titles in the interim. But both X-editors and Davis agree that this is only a temporary solution. "Alan's really busy and we love him for helping us out and filling in until we can find a regular writer," Harras said. "But right now, we're not ready to announce any decision of who'll write the X-Men after Davis."

Who are the most likely suspects? Take a look.

CAREER OPPORTUNITY With Kelly and Seagle's resignation from the X-Men books, the search has begun for new writers.

WHO: **Joe Casey**
WHY: Now working on *Cable* and an *Incredible Hulk* story arc, Casey represents the next wave in Marvel's talent pool.
HARRAS: "Joe is a great new writer and I'm really enjoying *Cable*. It may be a little too early in the game on something as big as X-Men, but it's definitely a possibility."
CASEY: "No comment."
ODDS: 2-1. Marvel's golden boy has the inside track.

WHO: **Alan Davis**
WHY: He's the fill-in guy Marvel editors rushed to Davis when Kelly and Seagle bailed. Will his guest stint last longer than expected?
HARRAS: "Love Alan. He can write and draw the X-Men for as long or as short as he wants. It's his call."
DAVIS: "I don't mind filling in, but I don't think I can write this

CASEY The odds-on favorite.

DAVIS It's his if he wants it.

NICIEZA The prodigal son.

HARRIS The go-to X-man.

CLAREMONT He wants to.

JURGENS

long-term. I just finished a big assignment [*JLA: The Nail*] which I wrote and penciled, and I'm really looking for something a little easier to do."

ODDS: 3-1. The job's Davis' if he wants it. But he doesn't.

WHO: **Fabian Nicieza**

WHY: He wrote *X-Men* from 1992-1995. After leaving Marvel to run Acclaim Comics, Nicieza's recently returned to the X-writing stables with *Gambit*.

HARRAS: "We're glad to have him back on one of the X-books. And that's a big challenge. His input on the other X-books is always welcome too."

NICIEZA: "I have neither been asked, nor do I expect to be asked to write the books. So to ask whether I would or not is a moot point."

ODDS: 3-1. After Acclaim's collapse, Nicieza should jump if given the chance.

WHO: **Joe Harris**

WHY: If there's an X-Men one-shot, Harris is probably writing it. He's toyed around with the characters, so jumping to the monthly books ain't so far-fetched for this relative newcomer.

HARRAS: "Joe is very new to the business, and is writing *Slingers*. I think it's a little too early in the game for him to consider the X-Men, but that could change."

HARRIS: "I'm fairly new to this industry and I don't know if the franchise would want someone like me. I'd be very interested if asked. But something tells me they're going to go for someone more high profile."

ODDS: 5-1. Too young. Too low profile. He needs more time.

WHO: **Chris Claremont**

WHY: After a legendary 17-year run on X-Men, whose name is better associated with the mutant team? Plus, he's back at Marvel. And when a writer was needed on *Fantastic Four* and *Wolverine*, Claremont was the go-to guy.

HARRAS: "Claremont's X-Men are the quintessential X-Men. As part of the editorial staff, his input is important. And who knows, he might write some specials next year. We're talking."

CLAREMONT: "I am senior to [X-Men editor] Mark Powers in the chain of command. So it'd be inappropriate for me to just say, 'Hey Mark! I want to write these books. In terms of pure wish fulfillment, I'd love to. But as a matter of practical decision-making, it's not up to me."

ODDS: 10-1. Claremont + X-Men = skyrocketing sales.

WHO: **Dan Jurgens**

WHY: He's always been associated with high-profile gigs (*a la* "Death of Superman"). He's got a recent Marvel hit in *Thor*.

HARRAS: "To be honest, I hadn't even thought of Dan. I believe I am the biggest moron on the face of the Earth for not thinking of Dan Jurgens. Hmm?"

JURGENS: "Of course I'd be interested. The

(continued on page 26)

THE NEW X-OVER

WILL MAGNETO TILT THE EARTH?

Magneto is tilting the world in a whole new direction this January.

The still-unnamed winter X-crossover will begin this January in *Uncanny X-Men* #366 with a December prologue in *X-Men* #85. The two-month story arc will feature the return of Magneto and his newest scheme for mutant domination. "The story's outcome will up the ante in human/mutant relations in the Marvel Universe in a very concrete way," X-editor Mark Powers said.

The crossover will center around Magneto threatening to tilt the Earth one degree on its axis. Whether Magneto succeeds is another question entirely. And through Magneto's plans, readers will finally learn the answer to the question "Who is Joseph?" In fact, a new female character named Mythos will get introduced with strong connections to both Magneto and Joseph. "Think of her as Joseph's mother," Powers said.

In addition, the crossover will see the first confrontation between Magneto and Wolverine since Magneto sucked the adamantium off the X-Man's bones back in *X-Men* #25. "And you know Wolverine is not going to be happy to see Magneto," Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras said.

And lastly, other Marvel books will feel the effects of the crossover, but it will not tie directly into any book beyond the two X-Men books. "However, things that happen in this story are the first step in a major End-of-the-Millennium story," Powers said. "And this will make a little more sense if one picks up [January's] *Cable* #65." ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

Lost pages of Zero Hour discovered in DC archive vaults: "We're burning them," DC Publisher Paul Levitz told reporters before screaming, "Rainmaker's a WHAT?!?" at recent DC/WildStorm merger press conference.

Budget cuts hit Galactic Empire hard: "I used to have this kick-ass meditation chamber. Now look at me," a melancholy Dark Lord of the Sith told the press.

Wizard President Gareb Shamus eats record-breaking 28 poppies. "The trick wasn't eating all that poppy meat," the drunk-with-power entrepreneur stated, "it was trying to keep 'em from squirming off the plate".

Intrigued.

WAID No chance in Hell.

DAVID He works best alone.

BYRNE His, at long last?

SOSA Could hit a homer.

BYRNE: MATTHEW J. LITAMAN, SOSA: JONATHAN DANIELS/ALLSPORT, ALL OTHERS: PAUL SCHRADER/WIZARD.

PHOTOS: PAUL SCHRADER.

MORRISON STICKS WITH 'JLA'...FOR NOW

Immediate plans call for JLA/JSA team-up

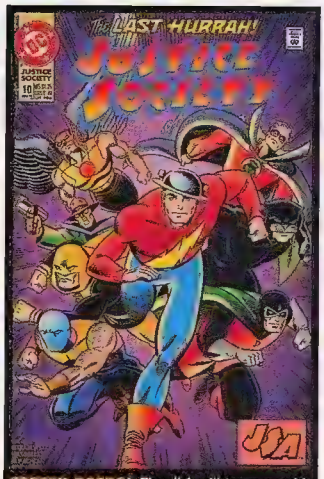
Will he stay or will he go?

Amid swirling rumors he would be leaving DC's best-selling title, popular *JLA* writer Grant Morrison decided to set the record straight. Kind of.

"I have the book planned out for a few more arcs," the writer said. "When I was at the San Diego Comic Con, talking to [*JLA* fill-in writer] Mark Waid and some other folks, we all had a big rush of enthusiasm, and I agreed to do a few more issues than I was originally planning. I don't know exactly when my last issue will be. Most likely it'll be somewhere in the mid-30s, but things can change."

Morrison's more immediate plans include a time-honored tradition—a JLA/Justice Society America team-up, starting with January's *JLA* #27 and running through #29.

"The story will team the surviving members of the JSA—and some new members—with the JLA," Morrison said. "It'll also introduce a new Johnny Thunder who will have control of the original Thunderbolt. As the story unfolds, we'll learn that the Thunderbolt is actually a fifth dimensional imp from Mr. Mxyzptlk's dimension who's been trapped on Earth for a long time."



GEEZER PATROL The JLA will team up with surviving members of the JSA in January.

The Johnny Thunder subplot of the team-up will serve as part of the larger story—the JLA/JSA war in the fifth dimension. "The fifth dimension forces decide it's time to invade Earth," Morrison said. "The JLA and JSA fight them back, and eventually take the battle into the fifth dimension itself."

And after that? "There are bigger plans, but we can't let everything out now," Morrison said. "But I'll be sticking with it for a while, still telling the big, epic, wide-screen stories." ■ **MATTHEW BRADY**

THE BUZZBIN

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE COMIC INDUSTRY

LEE

JIM LEE'S FINAL FLING! He becomes DC-exclusive as part of the WildStorm sale, so Jim Lee has until December 31, 1998 to do work for any other publisher. Word is he just *may* have a few Marvel pieces to get out of his system before the clock strikes midnight.

ADAMS GETS 'DANGER'-OUS! The rumor mill tells us Art Adams (*Monkeyman & O'Brien*) is lining up a special *Danger Girl* one-shot for early 1999.

DARKNESS GATHERS! We're still lookin' for creators on the Top Cow/DC *Darkness/Batman* and *JLA/Witchblade* crossovers. Rumored to be interested in writing them? *Wildcats'* Scott Lobdell and *Superman For All Seasons'* Jeph Loeb.

DARK KNIGHTS RETURN! Marvel Knights, the Joe Quesada-and-Jimmy Palmiotti branch of Marvel, is kickin' into high gear. The latest? A brand-spankin' new character they're creating, set to debut in April, 1999 and set to be drawn by two current big-name Image Comics artists.

'MAXX'-ED OUT! Where's *The Maxx*? On indefinite hiatus, as creator Sam Kieth is in Europe directing a film. No word on when the longtime Image title may return.

BYRNED AGAIN! He's penciling *Amazing Spider-Man*. He's writing *The Hulk*. Now it looks like busiest-man-in-comics John Byrne is also looking to do possible *Demon* and *Artemis* series at DC and a new *She-Hulk* at Marvel.

THE LAST ONE FALLS! The only major publisher *never* to do one o' them inter-company crossovers? Chaos! Comics. But it looks like Chaos! will finally take the bait: It's looking in the direction of Harris Comics' *Vampirella* sometime in 1999.

'X-Men Writers'

(continued from page 25)

X-Men represent possibilities without limits. But based on the last few years, and all the changes [in creative teams], I don't know if I'd be the right guy."

ODDS: 15-1. It's totally logical. That's why Marvel hasn't considered it.

WHO: **Mark Waid**

WHY: He's written X-Men before (1995-1996), but left after only six months due to friction with fellow writer Scott Lobdell. He then returned briefly as a creative consultant for the X-Men during Kelly and Seagle's tenure. Could the third time be the charm?

HARRAS: "Based on past experiences, I think Mark is very happy on *Captain America*."

WAID: "There isn't an instrument small enough in the universe to measure my interest. They'd have to offer me complete creative control and I'm not saying that to be arrogant. I need to know that it's my vision, not the editors."

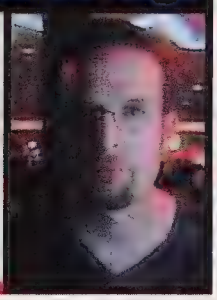
ODDS: 50-1. What Waid wants, Waid gets. That won't work on the X-Men.

(cont'd on next page) →

we looked it up

WHO? WHERE? WHY?

SKROCE (SKROS), Steve Ivan; proper noun. 1973-present; **1** Penciler for the new *Gambit* ongoing series, noted for his dynamic fight scenes and detailed backgrounds **2** Former penciler for *Amazing Spider-Man* and *Youngblood* **3** "Extreme sports" combination of soccer, bocce ball and curling seen on last year's ESPN "X Games"



LEE PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADER. SKROCE PHOTO COURTESY OF SKROCE.

DREAMING OF A 'CLERKS' CHRISTMAS

All the little fanboys wishing for more *Clerks* comics can expect something better than coal in their stocking next month.

"Clerks" characters Dante and Randal will return to the comic page in the *Clerks: Holiday Special*, a December one-shot written by "Clerks" director Kevin Smith, with art by previous *Clerks* artist Jim Mahfood. Bob Schreck, editor of Oni Press, gave the goods on the comic: "There's this door between the Quick Stop and the video store, and there's a gentleman renting a small apartment there. Randal is *convinced* he's Santa Claus." Randal tries to get Dante in on the rumor. And Jay and Silent Bob will start to suspect, too. "I just wanted to do a story about that door," Smith said with a laugh. "Every time I read the comic, I thought it was funny that everyone included it, but no one really addressed it."

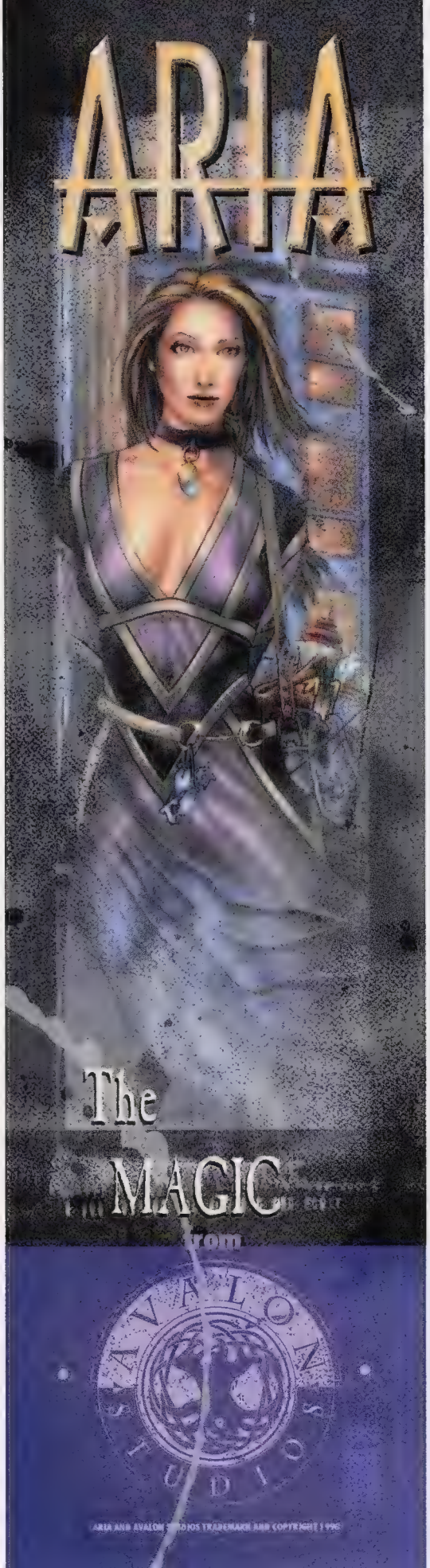
But is this *Special* the sign of an ongoing *Clerks* series? Don't get your hopes up, Schreck said. "Kevin's created a world of characters, but we don't want to burn them out," he said. "People tell us, 'Oh! Make *Clerks* monthly!' But we don't want to do that. We want it to be something that you get every now and then." ■ **CHRIS HUTCHINS**

'X-Men Writers'

WHO: **Peter David**
WHY: No more *Incredible Hulk*. No more *Aquaman*. David's a super-popular writer with no super-popular book. And he's a former *X-Factor* writer. Hmm?
HARRAS: "Peter is a writer with a very solo vision, but with the X-Men books, there is always a lot of give and take. And it's not always easy for some writers."
DAVID: "When you're on an X-book, you're not steering the boat. You're lashed to the top of an elephant and the elephant goes wherever it wants. Sometimes, you hang on for dear life. No, I don't think I'm a good fit."
ODDS: 100-1. Been there. Done that. Didn't work.

WHO: **John Byrne**
WHY: Marvel's looked to him to help rejuvenate Spider-Man and even relaunch *The Hulk*. But would he ditch those assignments to return to the one that helped make a name for him: The X-Men?
HARRAS: "John is probably going to work on an X-Men project next year, so in a very real way, he'll have a say on the X-books."
BYRNE: When asked if he was interested, he simply responded, "Nope."
ODDS: 2000-1. What he said. Nope.

WHO: **Sammy Sosa**
WHY: He hits a baseball real far. He blows kisses to his mom. He battled the Galactus-like Mark McGwire all season. X-Men sales will skyrocket in Wrigley Field and the Dominican Republic.
HARRAS: "Sammy's great. We'd love him on X-Men. And just think of all the free Cubs tickets. Gosh, I love Wrigley Field. Hey, you never know."
SOSA: "Baseball's been berry, berry good to me."
ODDS: 66,000,000-1. Sammy might not be willing to take a $7 million pay cut. ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**



ON THE MOVE

WHERE ARE THEY GOING?

Yowza! Comic creators are hopping faster than Mexican jumping beans. We make 'em sit still here for just a minute so you can get your bearings.

NAME	FORMER BOOK	NEW BOOK	WRITER/ ARTIST?	THE SCOOP
Joe Bennett	*Amazing Spider-Man*	*Nova*	Artist	The Spidey line gets slashed and Bennett is one of the casualties. He rebounds on Erik Larsen's new 1999 ongoing.
Alan Davis	*JLA: The Nail*	*X-Men*	Writer/Artist	The acclaimed *Nail* mini-series is over and Davis was scheduled for a six-issue X-art stint. Now, he's *writing* the book, too, on an interim basis.
Devin K. Grayson	*Catwoman* and *Titans*, which she still writes	*Black Widow*	Writer	Comics' newest Jill-of-all-trades nabs a "Marvel Knights" mini-series.
Randy Green	Big nothin'	*Witchblade*	Artist	Now batting for Michael Turner...Randy Green. Former Top Cow fill-in artist steps to the plate as the main guy on the publisher's flagship title.
Tony Harris	*Starman*	*Dr. Strange*	Writer/Artist	Current *Starman* co-creator gives it up to write and draw the good doctor in a "Marvel Knights" mini-series.
Barry Kitson	*JLA: Year One*	*The Flash/Green Lantern: The Brave and the Bold*	Artist	DC-exclusive artist Kitson makes the move to another JLA-spinoff mini-series.
Erik Larsen	Three books he still writes	*Nova*	Writer	What's gotten into Larsen? The *Savage Dragon* guy has gone from one monthly writing job to four in a mere seven months.
Jeff Matsuda	*Kaboom*	*Wolverine*	Artist	*Kaboom* fell victim to the Awesome implosion, but Matsuda emerges as writer Erik Larsen's hand-picked *Wolverine* artist.
Scott McDaniel	*Nightwing*	*Nightwing*	Artist	As other publishers start eyeballing McDaniel, DC locks him up to an exclusive pact.
Rags Morales	*Turok*	*Hourman*	Artist	*Turok*? A victim of Acclaim Comics' death. *Hourman*? A *JLA*-spinoff. Morales comes out looking like a winner.
Jon J Muth	*Silver Surfer*, and he's still there	*The Crow*	Writer/Artist	Muth keeps hangin' 10 as *Surfer* artist, but adds writing duties on Todd McFarlane's new *Crow* series.
Fabian Nicieza	Former Acclaim publisher	*Gambit*	Writer	Acclaim's comic line goes bye-bye, but Marvel–where Nicieza used to be an editor and X-Men writer–welcomes him back with open arms.
Paul Pelletier	*Green Lantern*	*Flash*	Artist	Pelletier helped out when *Lantern* went biweekly for the summer; his efforts pay off with a regular gig.
Tom Peyer	Still writing *Legion of Super-Heroes*	*Hourman*	Writer	Peyer is working very closely with *JLA* scribe Grant Morrison, who cooked up the new Hourman in *JLA* #12.
Al Rio	*Gen*[13]	*Purgatori*	Artist	Former teen-hero artist Rio takes a stab at blood-'n'-horror on a new Chaos! launch.
Steve Skroce	*Youngblood*	*Gambit*	Artist	Former Marvel artist (*Amazing Spider-Man*, *X-Man*) returns to the fold on an X-Men title after bolstering his résumé on *Youngblood*.

'GAMBIT' GEARS UP WITH NICIEZA

Ex-X-writer spearheads launch of new 'Gambit' series in December

Gambit's back with the X-Men, and his past has been forgiven. But that doesn't mean the Marvel mutant's troubles are over...especially if Fabian Nicieza has anything to say about it.

Former *X-Men* writer Nicieza is joining artist Steve Skroce for the new *Gambit* ongoing series in December. And Nicieza—back to freelance writing after a stint as Acclaim Comics' publisher—plans on running the Cajun mutant through the wringer with new villains and a perilous subplot.

Gambit #1-#4 will explain the new situation—in the time between Gambit being stranded in Antarctica (*Uncanny X-Men* #350) and his return (*X-Men* #81), Gambit made a deal with a mysterious manipulator named New Son, Nicieza said.

"Gambit wants to be a trusted member of the X-Men, but he's being asked to steal—or coerced [into] stealing—certain items for New Son. Gambit's convinced the things he's stealing will be positive for mutantkind. But in the meantime, he has to keep this secret."

In the next arc, readers will meet The Pig, a new villain who provides goons for super-villain organizations. The Thieves' Guild—the New Orleans family that adopted Gambit when he was a child—will be seen later in the year, too.

Gambit's grim past is something Nicieza wants to explore, but not at the expense of the character's personality. "Gambit can have an adventurous, fun-loving approach to what he's doing," Nicieza said. "And he can easily slide into depression and guilt. That balance will be fun and challenging at the same time."

But the center of Gambit's new life is fulfilling the demands of New Son. And by #12, the story will culminate into a conflict with what Nicieza called "an obvious antagonist." Is it Mr. Sinister, the villain with whom Gambit shares a long history? Nicieza offered only one hint: "They'll meet in a storyline that may not necessarily be set in the present day." ■ **CHRIS HUTCHINS**

UNDERTAKER SLAMS CHAOS!

The Undertaker, Kane and even Paul Bearer are making their way out of the ring...and into Chaos! Comics.

The World Wrestling Federation and Chaos! have signed a deal to create a monthly *Undertaker* comic beginning in March, 1999. Beau Smith (*The Tenth*) will write and newcomer Rob Brown will serve as penciler. Chaos! plans for every issue to feature one comic-art cover and one photo cover.

"The story will take a look at the life of the Lord of Darkness in the ring and beyond," Chaos! Publisher Brian Pulido said. "This is one comic where you don't apologize for the fact that every issue has a big battle."

Not only will comic stores carry *Undertaker*, but the WWF will sell the comic at WWF events, in its catalogs, on newsstands and on its Web site.

Chaos! is currently in negotiation for other WWF characters "Stone Cold Steve Austin and Sable are who we're interested in," Pulido said. "But first, we're focusing on the natural fit: The Undertaker. Yes, we're wrestling freaks over here." ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

NEWS & NOTES

ALCHEMY TEXTS
What if superheroes fought in the Vietnam War? The one-shot *Armageddon Squad* poses that question when it comes out in December.

ALTERNATIVE COMICS
The upcoming 32-page one-shot *The Horrible Truth About Comics* will detail lots of "how to's" in the comic profession when published this December.

AWESOME-HYPERWERKS
The Coven (vol. 2) #1 hits in December with four variant covers from creator **Ian Churchill**.

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND
Neil Gaiman's "Day of the Dead" script for the "Babylon 5" TV show goes on sale, with proceeds benefiting the CBLDF. Order online at http://www.cbldf.org or by calling (800) 99-CBLDF.

DARK HORSE COMICS
December's *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* #4 ships with two covers: One art cover by Hector Gomez and one photo cover of "Buffy" star **Sarah Michelle Gellar**!

DC COMICS
Love hurts! Find out how much in *Heart Throbs*, a four-issue anthology starting in November featuring the talents of **Tim Sale** (*Superman For all Seasons*), Bruce Timm ("The Batman Adventures") and more.

EVENT COMICS
Ash: Fire and Crosstire #1 kicks off a new *Ash* ongoing in December. **James Robinson** (*Starman*) writes and Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti (*Daredevil*) provide art.

VAMPIRELLA

HARRIS COMICS
Vampirella fights to save Neo-Tokyo, Japan, in December's *Vampirella 2999 A.D. Manga Ashcan*. This ashcan will contain an all-new story with art

cont'd on page 32 →

JSA WEEK PLANNED

DC Comics' past is visiting its present.

DC has announced a Justice Society "fifth-week event" for March, 1999. On a week in which no other DC books will ship, members of DC's Golden Age Justice Society will be featured in a series of one-shots written by the *Starman* team of James Robinson and David Goyer.

The idea, according to Robinson, harkens back to the feel of old issues of *All-Star Comics*, where the Justice Society would split up with individual members taking on villains. Two "bookend" one-shots will serve as framing sequences, with the entire JSA fighting a common enemy.

Individual specials set between the bookends have yet to be decided upon, both character and creator-wise.

'SOCIETY' PAGES Robinson and Goyer make history with old-time superheroes in the JSA.

While the JSA week will be set in the 1940s' Golden Age, its ramifications will be felt in the present, where it may help spark formation of a new JSA, made up of both old and new heroes. "We'd like to do a new *JSA* series," editor Dan Raspler said. "DC is behind it, and James and David are behind it. But we want everyone to have a chance to see the JSA shine during their golden years first. We're hoping to see a lot more of the original JSA in specials and other projects in the coming year."

In the meantime, Raspler said, "It's really exciting to read the script from James and David, and to see these characters handled with such respect and enthusiasm. We really hope that this will lay the groundwork for a 21st-century revival of the Justice Society, one that will live up to the original in every way." ■ **MATTHEW BRADY**

THUMBING OFF

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

THUMBS UP

JIM LEE AT DC: Selling WildStorm to DC lets Jim Lee settle back into the artist's chair. And now that he's exclusive with DC, could a Lee-drawn Batman or Superman title be far behind?

RETURN OF THE 'MARVEL HANDBOOK': 'Bout time. It's been *years* since Marvel provided a definitive reference for its characters. Heck, it'll let us know how much Kingpin weighs since he pounded all those croissants while in Europe.

HARLEY QUINN AND BATGIRL IN THE DCU: DC will finally introduce Harley Quinn and a new Batgirl into Batman continuity in 1999. Now the super-popular animated characters can rev up the Bat-books even more.

THUMBS DOWN

X-MEN CREATIVE ROLLER COASTER: Chalk up another creative team–Joe Kelly and Steven T. Seagle–that departs the X-Men due to creative differences with the X-editors. Can't we all just get along? The X-Men have suffered the last three years because of the inability to maintain any creative consistency.

END OF SPIDER-MAN: That was *it*? Spider-Man's "Final Chapter" storyline in September was supposed to end the Spidey saga and gear up for the November relaunch. But what we got was a clichéd "I'm sick of being Spider-Man" ending in which the downtrodden Peter Parker quit and burned his costume. Let's hope the relaunch features more originality than this "ending" did.

CLIFFHANGER LATENESS: Where's *Danger Girl* and *Battle Chasers*? Superstar creators J. Scott Campbell and Joe Madureira had many, many months before Cliffhanger's launch to put issues in the can, but by issue #4, they're both later than late. Didn't we learn anything from the launch of Image?

SHOOTER PLANS 'DARING' COMEBACK

Ex-Marvel editor-in-chief launches new line

Jim Shooter is back in comics. Just don't expect him to discuss it. "I'm not ready to talk," Shooter said about his new venture, Daring Comics. "It's too early."

HE'S BACK Shooter's Daring Comics launches in March.

Shooter, the boy wonder who started writing professionally at age 13 and later became Marvel's editor-in-chief, saw his career take a nose-dive in the 1990s. Shooter is a bit shy about talking about his new company, given his recent track record. He was ousted from Valiant Comics in 1993, and his next two ventures—Defiant and Broadway Comics—failed under his direction.

Still, information is available, notably a press release found on the Web site of retailer Mile High Comics, owned by longtime Shooter friend Chuck Rozanski.

Set for an early 1999 launch, Daring Comics will debut with *Anomalies*, an ongoing science fiction/teen superhero book. The second title, *Rathh of God*, set to hit shortly after *Anomalies*, stars a professional executioner working in a world where all life is sacred.

Shooter alone will finance Daring Comics—a change from his three ill-fated, investor-funded companies of the '90s—so he can maintain complete creative control. That means, however, that the line's expected expansion to an eight-title universe won't come quickly, and initial print runs will be low.

Anomalies #1, written by Shooter and illustrated by Joe James, will have a print run of 5,500 copies. Most will retail for $2.95 each, but 500 can be ordered autographed by Shooter and James for $14.95 each. ■ **TRENT D. McNEELEY**

contest winners

LUCKY STIFFS

• **Joseph Silver** of Cottage City, Md., come on down! You're the winner of *Wizard* #84's "Child of Darkness" contest! As such, you win Joe Benitez original art, *and* your art gets published in *The Darkness*! Not bad, eh?

• **Jimmy Hung** of San Pedro, Calif., gets a DVD player and the "Night Warriors: Darkstalkers' Revenge" discs to play on it from *Wizard* #84's "Darkstalkers' Revenge" contest!

SHOOTER PHOTO BY ALBERT ORTEGA.

by **Kevin Lau** and will not be reprinted in any other format.

IMAGE COMICS
• AVALON STUDIOS
December's launch of *Aria* #1 features a one-in-four variant cover by *Fathom* artist **Michael Turner**.
• HIGHBROW
Wedding bells chime! Longtime supporting characters William Jonson and lovely Rita Medermade tie the knot in December's *Savage Dragon* #56. **Erik Larsen** presides over the ceremony.
• TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS
December's ***KISS**: The Psycho Circus* #16 features a young boy who gets a ticket to the Circus... and has his greatest wish fulfilled.
• TOP COW COMICS
Look for a one-in-four **Marc Silvestri** variant cover on December's Witchblade/Tomb Raider team-up book.
• WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS
It's a cover-up! Each of the three December Cliffhanger books will sport three covers—one by each Cliffhanger creator, **Joe Madureira**, J. Scott Campbell and Humberto Ramos!

BATTLE CHASERS #7

KITCHEN SINK PRESS
Vertigo/DC Comics artist **Peter Kuper** (*The System*) contributes a wordless tale to December's *The Spirit: The New Adventures* #9.

LIAR COMICS
Look for the introduction of the new important character Donn while the mystery revolving around the Protector is revealed in December's ***More Than Mortal**: Truths & Legends* #4.

MARVEL COMICS
Jay Faerber takes over as new *Generation X* writer with December's #48... *Marvel Universe* (last issue #7), *Rampaging Hulk* (#7), *Alpha Flight* (#20) and *Heroes for Hire* (#19) are all soon to be canceled... 'Tis official! ***Incredible Hulk*** ends with January's #474 and is replaced by *The Hulk* the following month.

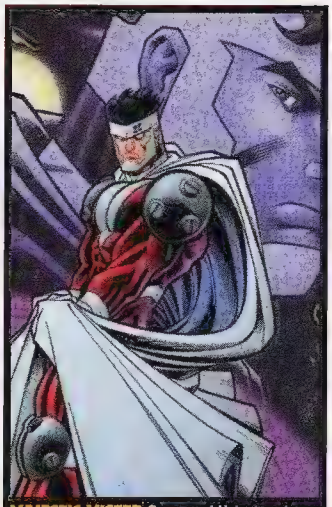
ONI PRESS
Oni Double Feature #10 features a one-page adventure of "Sam and Max, Freelance Police" by **Steve Purcell**.

VIZ COMICS
Dragon Ball Z Part Two #1 hits in December. The 14-issue monthly series details the struggle of the adult martial artist Goku against the all-powerful alien race, the Saiyans.

WILDSTORM BREWING IN 1999

'StormWatch' sequel, 'Mr. Majestic' monthly slated for '99

There's a storm of activity at WildStorm Productions these days. Not only is Scott Lobdell and Travis Charest's *Wildcats* revamp just around the corner (pushed to January as a result of DC's recent purchase of WildStorm), but the company also has two other new projects lined up for early 1999. And the creators involved are thinking *big*.


MAJESTIC MISTER Casey and Holguin scheme to tell big, big stories for the new *Mr. Majestic*.

First up with a tentative February release date is *The Authority*, Warren Ellis and Bryan Hitch's sequel to the now-defunct *StormWatch*. The new title follows the StormWatch members who survived the recent *WildC.A.T.s/Aliens* one-shot, uniting them with new blood to form a team that can handle huge, often earth-shattering problems. Ellis said *The Authority* will provide him a chance to tell different stories: "A lot of the dark, political conspiracy stuff is gone. *The Authority* operates on a different scale. If *StormWatch* is the TV show, *The Authority* is the wide-screen movie."

Meanwhile, Joe Casey (*Incredible Hulk*) and Brian Holguin (*KISS: The Psycho Circus*), write a new *Mr. Majestic* series in April featuring the former WildC.A.T.s character. They'll be joined by penciler Ed McGuinness (*Deadpool*) and, according to Casey, the series will be played out on the grandest of scales.

"We're just going to completely go for it and tell the kind of stories you never see in comics anymore," Casey said. "Every issue we're going to think of the biggest story we can, the biggest challenges any character could face. We want to do things that will challenge readers, not in a scratch-you-head, metaphysical way, but in a big, huge, let's-blow-reader's-minds kind of way."

Case in point: When asked the details of issue #1, Casey referred to the title's tagline: "Remember when superheroes could move planets?" ■ **SCOTT A. AUBREY**

'DAWN' WINNER CROWNED

For Shannon McFalland, bright red hair and a great costume brought more than just longing looks from gawking fanboys. They netted her $1,000.

McFalland was the winner of the first-ever official "Dawn Look-a-Like Contest" at 1998's Dragon*Con in Atlanta, Ga. Dawn creator Joseph Michael Linsner was on hand to judge the contest and fork over $1,000 in prize money. "Over the years, girls have popped up here and there dressed as Dawn," Linsner said. "But to see 40 of 'em, dressed in all the different outfits of Dawn—well, it was a moment that helps me feel that I'm in the right place. I better keep on drawing Dawn—it appears to be working." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

RED DAWN Shannon McFalland won a cool grand for dressing up like the comic heroine Dawn.

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADER

EARTH X: READY FOR ACTION

THOR'S A CHICK Sketched by Leon, the Thunder God serves penance as a woman.

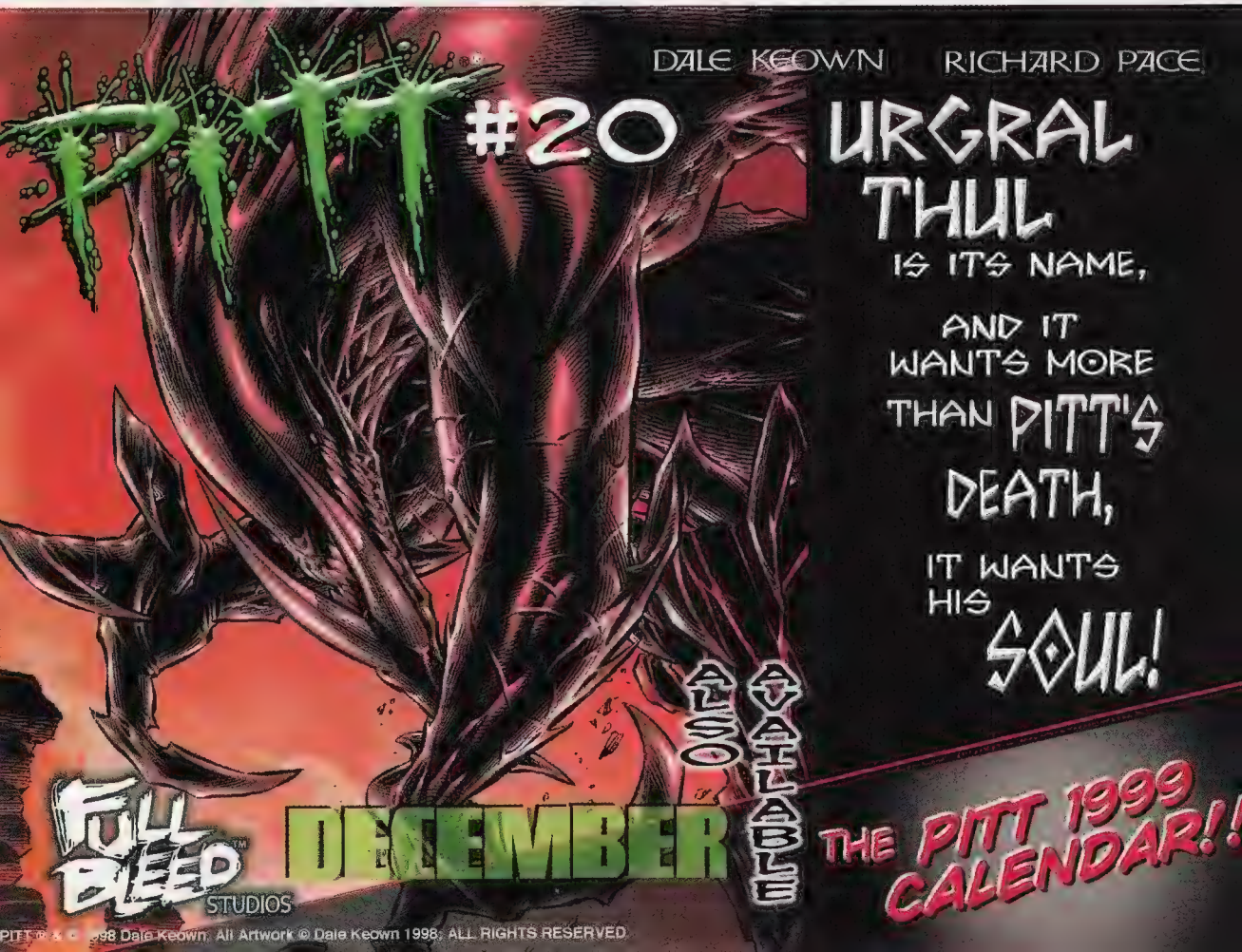
The future is finally here.

The contracts are inked for *Earth X*, the much-anticipated brainchild of Alex Ross (*Kingdom Come*) that catapults Marvel's heroes into a future where *everyone* has superpowers. The project, which debuted in a preview comic in *Wizard* #77, gets rolling in December with the *Earth X Sketchbook*, featuring 25 new, never-before-seen Ross pieces.

After that, the 14-issue monthly *Earth X* starts in January with Ross painting covers and co-writing with Jim Krueger (*Footsoldiers*). The team of John Paul Leon, Bill Reinhold and Matt Hollingsworth (*Challengers of the Unknown*) will handle the art. And after that?

"I see no reason that this will be the last you'll see of *Earth X*," Ross hinted. "Marvel wants to see what they can spin out of this." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

HORNSWOGGLED It is unknown what presence this new Loki, as designed by Ross, will have in *Earth X*.

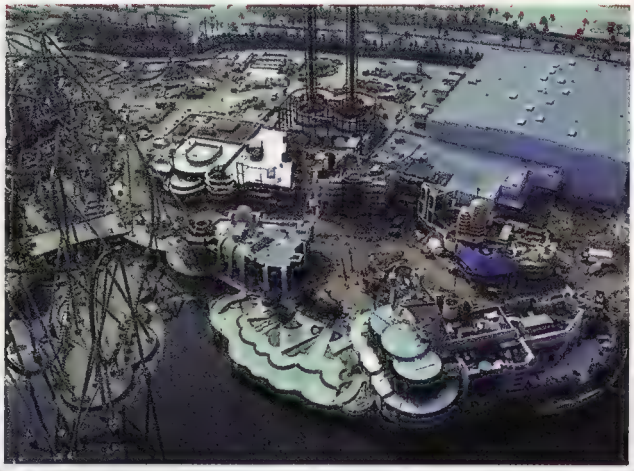


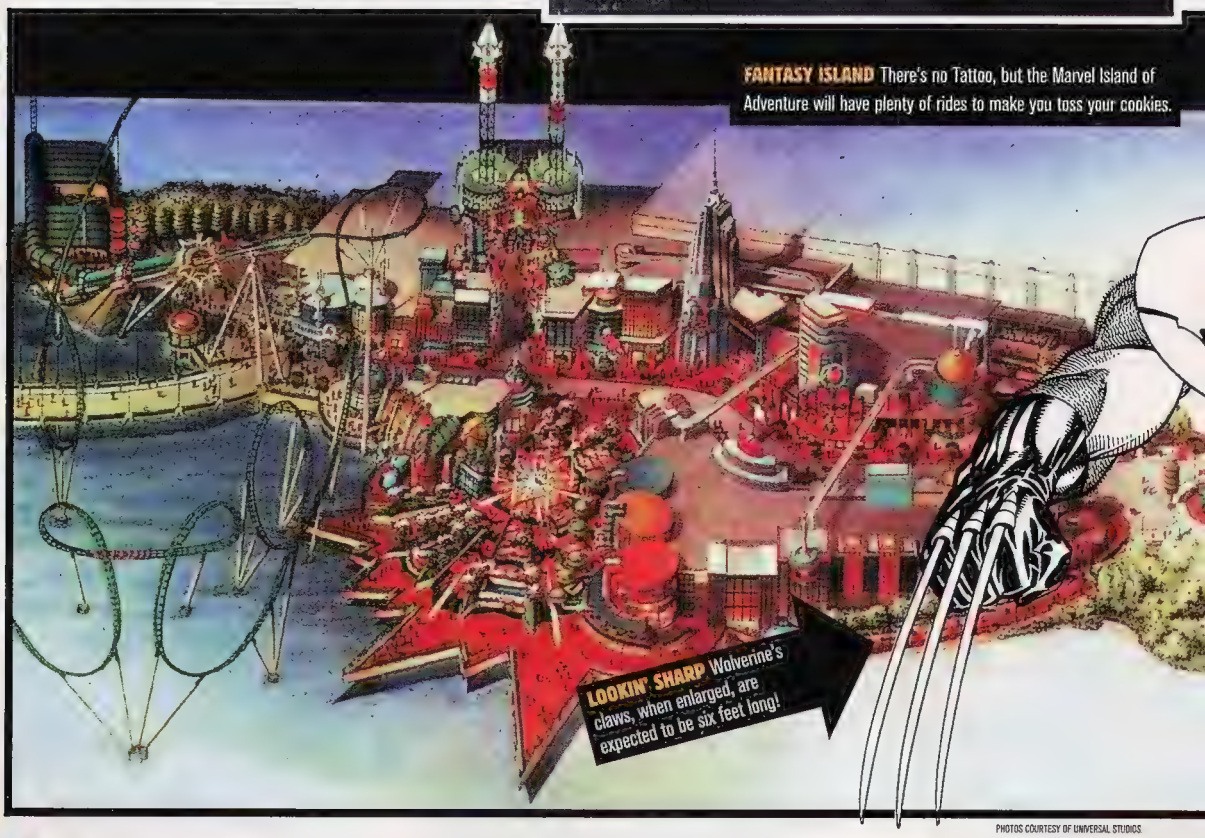
MARVEL ISLAND OF ADVENTURE READY TO FLY

Four rides, cafe and comic store all open in March '99

Call your travel agent! The much-anticipated Marvel Island of Adventure at Universal Studios Theme Park in Orlando, Fla., is almost open.

Marvel rides including a Spider-Man 3-D simulator, a 45-mile-per-hour Hulk roller coaster and a 200-foot Dr. Doom's Fearfall are up and running and being tested. The island opens to the public in March, 1999, and a grand opening is slated for June 1999. And Marvel artists such as *Uncanny X-Men*'s Chris Bachalo (who contributed a piece for the Fantastic Four Cafe that measures more than 51 feet) and *X-Men*'s Adam Kubert will be interested to see what their work looks like. "I did exterior drawings for a lot of the island," Kubert explained. "I did everything on 10-by-15-inch paper. And some of this stuff is going to be enlarged to 72 feet! It's a really cool job." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**





FANTASY ISLAND There's no Tattoo, but the Marvel Island of Adventure will have plenty of rides to make you toss your cookies.

LOOKIN' SHARP Wolverine's claws, when enlarged, are expected to be six feet long!

PHOTOS COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

LIVIN' LARGE Artists Chris Bachalo and Adam Kubert will see their drawings super-sized and displayed throughout Marvel Island.

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LAST MAN STANDING

comic battles you never thought you'd see

DEADPOOL VS. HITMAN

THE COMBATANTS

TALE OF THE TAPE

6'2"	HEIGHT	5'10"
215 lbs.	WEIGHT	180 lbs.
74"	REACH	70"
San Francisco	HOMETOWN	Gotham City
266	KILLS	110
Gross skin	DISFIGUREMENT	Gross eyes

Wade Wilson was a mercenary granted power as a result of Canada's "Weapon X" program. A marginal success, he gained superhuman powers but was scarred and driven insane. Fueled by his inhuman strength, endurance and regenerative powers, Wilson has returned to his mercenary ways as Deadpool.

Tommy Monaghan was a mercenary who only hunted criminals. Narrowly avoiding death at the hands of an alien, Monaghan discovered his encounter with the creature granted him of telepathy and x-ray vision. Now, Monaghan targets supervillain scum as the Hitman.

With Deadpool tired of Hitman muscling in and Hitman sick of Deadpool's disregard for life, the two take on each other.

tha winnah... Having been lured into The Cauldron (the section of Gotham City that's Monaghan's home turf), Wilson—a student of the "if you're going to do it, make the explosion REALLY big" theory—takes out Monaghan's entire apartment complex in case he's inside. He isn't. Searching the rubble for his opponent, Deadpool leaves himself open for Hitman's attack: a barrage from an automatic rifle and a hand-made pipe bomb. Severely wounded but already regenerating, Deadpool drags himself to shelter as Hitman gives chase. Looking to pinpoint his prey and end things quickly, Hitman reaches out with his telepathy to scan Wade's mind. Big mistake. Stunned by the insane mess that is Wilson's mind, Hitman lets out a scream that lets Deadpool know where he is and—BLAM!—the dazed Hitman becomes just another slash in Deadpool's kill book.

this month's battle drawn by IAN CHURCHILL

CHURCHILL

SPIDEY FIGURE Madureira has always wanted to draw Spider-Man, his favorite Marvel character. (But Joe's dog Simba loves Spidey more as he chewed the right leg off Joe's favorite Spider-Man action figure.) *"The first comic I bought was Spidey with Kraven the Hunter in it. I don't remember the issue, but I do remember trying to stick to walls when I was seven."*

SHIROW POSTERS Manga artist Masamune Shirow is Madureira's idol. His art book *Intron Depot* is the one Joe refers to most. And the animated "Ghost in the Shell" and "Appleseed" lured Joe's interest toward Japanimation. *"He's the Jack Kirby of Japan for me. He's the first guy I saw and collected. And his female characters are still the best."*

LIGHTSABER It can't cut through stuff like his Excalibur or Katana blade, but Joe just loves the sound effects it makes as it shakes through the air. *"I bought two of them, but my brother broke the Vader one. The Rebellion wins again!"*

It's a Mad, Mad

Wanna know where hot artist Joe Madureira lives and works? No, we can't tell you his address, but you *can* take a peek at the studio where he draws the red-hot *Battle Chasers*.

Garrison, Calibretto, Red Monika and the rest of the *Battle Chasers* cast were dreamed up in the studio based in the dungeon of Madureira's Long Island, N.Y., home. He spends approximately 60 hours a day working, most of them at night. "I've worked non-stop for over 24 hours many times when deadlines needed to be met," Madureira says with a laugh.

But all work and no play would make the 23-year-old Madureira a dull boy. So video games, anime and even ninja stars color the shelves, floor and walls of the artist's pad. "One could call it distractions," Madureira says, "but I use it for inspiration."

So enjoy *Wizard*'s guided tour of Madureira's fun-filled studio. But be careful not to touch anything—you break it, you bought it, pal.

TIGER CALENDAR Madureira's wife bought it for him. He was banned from having a Carmen Electra one. It lists all his deadlines, meetings and even a Matchbox 20 concert at Jones Beach. *"Also, the wolf creatures in* Battle Chasers *#1 were going to look more like tigers because of this calendar, but I changed it to wolves at the last second. Why? Wolves are darker and more evil looking than tigers."*

ENVELOPE ART Hanging directly over his calendar is a piece of Red Monika envelope art that was sent to him by a *Wizard* reader. *"I saw the envelope and was so impressed. It reminds me every day that people are loving the book. You can never get enough envelope art."*

EVANGELION POSTER Madureira loves the robot designs in this movie and researched it while creating Calibretto. *"Most giant robots are big and bulky whereas these are long and thin. It's almost like Spider-Man as opposed to the Hulk."*

MANGA VIDEOS Owner of close to a thousand anime movies, Madureira's personal faves are "Dagger of Kamui" and "Ranma 1/2." In fact, Calibretto's shape is modeled after the title character in "Giant Robo," another of Joe's favorite Japanese animated movies/characters. To figure out how Calibretto will throw a punch or move, Joe pops "Giant Robo" in the VCR. *"Also if I need to draw a cool magic spell, I track down any number of animated movies and it sparks ideas."*

RESIDENT EVIL FIGURES Joe admires the designs of the Resident Evil monsters and has Resident Evil figures scattered throughout his office. *Resident Evil I* and *II* were two of Joe's all-time favorite video games. *"It's how I'd make a game: To have a story where your character always triggers events as opposed to* Tomb Raider *where you spend most of your time looking for a door."*

PHONE NUMBER LIST Jim Lee, J. Scott Campbell, Humberto Ramos and even the local deli for a quick mid-afternoon snack are tacked on his wall in different color inks for easy access. *"I have a rolodex too, but it's easier to look on the wall than flip through the rolodex."*

REFERENCE BOOKS Madureira is known for his manga-like work and has more than 400 manga reference books, including his current favorite *Dark Hair Captured*. However, most of his inspiration for *Battle Chasers* has come from Ralph McQuarrie's Star Wars designs. *"Star Wars characters like Vader and other Jedi Knights were designed after samurai. I always knew that, but I never really looked hard at it until recently."*

CDs The idea for Garrison, a sword-wielding superstar who is reluctant to use his sword, came while Madureira was listening to the "Last of the Mohicans" soundtrack, just one of more than 600 CDs in his collection. *"When I hear a song, I start to form a story for a character. I go through phases every two days or so from punk to Broadway musicals to heavy metal."*

'WIZARD' PEEKS INSIDE THE SECRET STUDIO OF ARTIST JOE MADUREIRA

Mad World

BY MATTHEW SENREICH • PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

JONES COLA Did you know WildStorm Studios bottles its own soda–Jones Cola–and distributes it nationally? Look for a *Battle Chasers* bottle sometime in October. *"I won't comment on the taste, but the labels are so cool. Not every deli will have it. It's a big California thing, but you can find it in smaller circulation across the U.S."*

CHARACTER SKETCHES Madureira always uses character designs before penciling a new hero or villain into his book. New *Battle Chasers* villain Brass Demur is expected to debut in *Battle Chasers* #4 and will fight Garrison in issue #5. *"His entire body is a weapon and those freaky tattoos have something to do with his fighting."*

REFERENCE MATERIAL (*LUNAR*/"FATAL FURY: THE MOTION PICTURE") Joe's using *Lunar*, another all-time favorite role-playing Sega Genesis video game, for help with location and monster design in upcoming *Battle Chasers* issues. And looking at "Fatal Fury: The Motion Picture" zaps energy into Joe's fight scenes. *"You can see in Uncanny X-Men how the character's fists or feet would blur. It gives my art excitement and energy more than focus on classic superhero physique."*

BATTLE CHASERS: THE MOVIE Two fans from Mexico created an 8 1/2" x 14" plaque signifying a make-believe *Battle Chasers* movie. One was created for each Cliffhanger member and each comes complete with a mock-up soundtrack CD case. *"I'm so curious to pry it open and find out what CD is in there, but I don't want to ruin the plaque."*

PRISS FROM "BUBBLEGUM CRISIS" (the anime series) & FELICIA FROM *DARKSTALKERS* (the video game) Joe buys tons of model kits, but never puts them together. *"They always look awesome on the box. These are a few that people assembled and painted for me."*

SHURIKEN When he hits a creative roadblock, Joe tosses his ninja star at a wooden staircase in the middle of his office. He often misses and it hits the back wall. *"I bought this the same day as my Katana sword. After [editor Scott] Dunbier is done yelling at me, I throw it at my voodoo doll of him."*

SEGA SATURN *Clockwork Knight II* and *Astal* are the two games Mad loves most. They're both platform side-scrolling games. *"No one makes good side-scrolling games anymore besides Sega and these have the best bosses."*

NINTENDO 64 *Banjo-Kazooie* is Joe's favorite game right now, especially the Pirate board (the second board). *"When I first bought it, I played it around the clock for three days straight. But with deadlines looming, I haven't touched it in weeks. When I design the Battle Chasers game, I want to model [it after] this one."*

EXCALIBUR The sword was a gift from Madureira's former inker on *Uncanny X-Men*, Tim Townsend, in exchange for a double-page spread of Batman fighting Hellboy. *"One day, I'll actually draw it for him."*

KATANA BLADE Sometimes he swings the sword around for cool poses that he could draw *Battle Chasers*' Garrison in. But mostly Joe just hacks and slashes while on the phone (especially with his editor, Scott Dunbier). *"I got really into weapons for about one week and now I pick them up now and again for fun and use them in creative ways. This sword I sliced a watermelon with."*

FATAL FURY WALL SCROLL Joe got the inspiration for Red Monika when he saw the shower scene of Mai in "Fatal Fury." *"Everyone complains that Monika's boobs are too big, but they need to watch "Fatal Fury" and I'm off the hook."*

VIDEO GAMES Joe's cocky when it comes to his favorite fighting game *Tekken II* (not *III*), which he played non-stop for months. He loves using Nina for her grappling moves that crack your bones in multiple places. Joe's favorite RPG (role-playing game) is *Final Fantasy VI* (not *VII*) for Super NES. *"I don't want to piss people off, but it had the better story.* Bard's Tale *was fantastic too."*

PLAYSTATION Joe prefers Japanese imports such as *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* to American games. *"The American versions come out nine months after the Japanese ones. I got to play* Final Fantasy VII *almost a year before it showed up in the U.S....only problem was it was in Japanese and I didn't understand a word of the story."*

GAMING CHAIR Joe purchased a big, leather chair as his drawing chair. But when it didn't fit under his drawing table, he adopted it as his official gaming chair. *"So I have the same cheap, crappy chair for the last seven years under my desk and this incredibly comfy chair that I play all my games in."*

PSM Joe drew the covers for *PlayStation Magazine* of the Mortal Kombat IV and Resident Evil II characters. He's also doing an upcoming Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver one. *"But I actually haven't designed any video games yet. I want to eventually. I'm in contact with lots of game companies, but I just haven't found the time to do character designs."*

Wizard *staff writer Matthew Senreich will* GLADLY *take the highest bid for Joe's phone number, address and phone list...*

invasion america

Japan's wildly successful POKÉMON sets its sights on America

BY PAUL SUDLOW AND GREG ORLANDO

If you're not careful, this cartoon will send you to the hospital. And it's coming to the United States.

Pokémon is one part phenomenon, one part tale for the history books. It began life as a black-and-white role-playing video game in Japan, created by Satoshi Tagiri and served up for Nintendo's black-and-white hand-held Game Boy system in 1996. Combining elements of role-playing and virtual pet raising, *Pokémon* (pronounced POH-kay-mahn) proved to have a potent kick indeed.

"Pokémon has the opportunity to be the biggest hit in a long time," says Norman Grossfeld, president of 4Kids Productions. "If we can achieve just a fraction of the success seen in Japan, Pokémon will be much bigger than the Power Rangers."

In the original *Pokémon* game, players controlled Ash, a 10-year-old boy who captured, trained and fought cute little Pokémon or "pocket monsters." The linchpin of the game's popularity is (and was) Pikachu (PEEK-uh-chew), a little, yellow, electricity-wielding fuzz-ball pocket monster who oozes cute from every pore.

The game sold eight million copies and inspired a weekly show on Japanese television—one that put 700 children and adults into the hospital when an episode showing a series of flashing lights caused a wave of seizures (see sidebar). It didn't deter the Pokémon's popularity, though; the mania had already struck Japan.

In Japan, kids wear Pokémon clothing. They can't keep Pokémon toys on the shelves. *Pokémon* manga (comics) appear in six different publications and, to top things off, the little pocket monsters and their trainers appear on more than 600 different products.

On September 7, the U.S. invasion began. "Pokémon" started airing on American television. Soon, there will be *Pokémon* comics and videos, video games, toys and a collectible card game. Pokémania has officially arrived.

ON THE TUBE

SPEARHEADING THE CHARGE will be the nationally syndicated "Pokémon" TV show.

"[The cartoon is] a journey of discovery," says Bill Flanagan, editor for Viz Comics. "In every episode the characters come across some problem, solve it, then move on. At the same time, they're learning more about Pokémon and progressing in their training skills."

Fifty episodes of the half-hour show have been produced by 4Kids Productions. The cartoon loosely follows the plot of the original Game Boy video game, revolving around the struggle of Pokémon trainers Ash, Misty and Brock to become the ultimate pocket monster trainers. Together with Professor Oak, the world's foremost authority on all things Pokémon, Ash and friends must capture, train and collect a host of bizarre monsters, each wielding one of 15 different "elemental powers."

The cast will encounter some speed bumps on the road to becoming master Pokémon trainers. Ash and pals will face the evil trio "Team Rocket" and its mysterious boss. The Rocketeers are out to steal ultra-rare monsters for their employer and they've got an ace up their collective sleeve in Meowth, a pocket monster with the unique ability to speak human languages.

"There is a magic to the show," says Grossfeld. But part of that magic will be some sleight-of-hand—at least as far as the infamous "seizure" episode is concerned. Grossfeld says that particular 30 minutes won't be seen in America without some changes, if at all.

MONSTER HIT If Ash and his li'l monster Pikachu have their way, they'll be the biggest import since the Power Rangers.

IN PRINT

POKÉMON'S SECOND WAVE rolls in on the printed page. Viz Comics' translation of the *Pokémon* comics are due on store shelves in November. The first comic offering, *Pokémon: The Electric Tale of Pikachu* (written and drawn by Toshihiro Ono), is a four-part mini-series detailing young Ash's first run-in with his cute pal Pikachu.

"The manga is aimed at a slightly older audience than the TV series," Flanagan says. "The stories are a bit more sophisticated and Ash, though only 10, is beginning to take notice of girls."

Though based on the game and cartoons, the *Pokémon* comic sets out on a different tangent. "The manga has its own continuity," Flanagan says. "The anime focuses on the three kids and their Pokémon. The manga is basically Ash's story." Misty and Gary, major supporting characters in the cartoon, have lesser roles in the comic, he says. Plot details differ between the two—the animated Ash is given Pikachu by Professor Oak while in the comic he finds the little critter under the floorboards, for example—but the overall world is basically the same in both versions.

After *The Electric Tale* sees completion, Viz plans to roll out more mini-series, and to collect those series into graphic novels, ensuring the invasion rolls on.

ON THE SHELVES

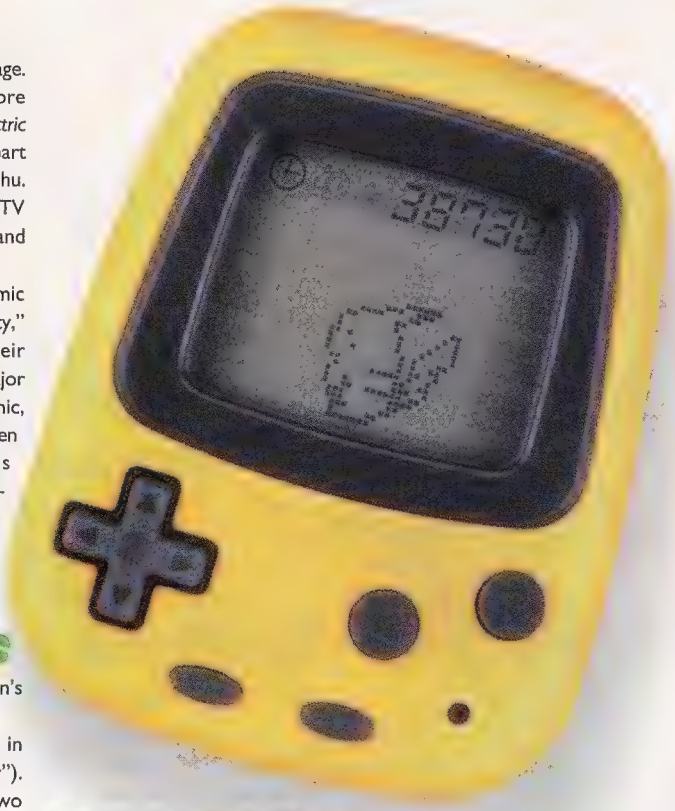
TOY STORES WILL ALSO CATCH a piece of Pokémon's pie, kicking off with Hasbro's offerings in November.

Hasbro will sell Pikachu and seven other monsters encased in clear rubber, mega-bouncing superballs (the "Power Bouncer"). Also available will be a Pokémon "Battle Figures" set containing two action figures of one pocket monster in different stages of its evolution, plush figures and electronic figures that make authentic Pokémon sounds and which can respond to *other* Pokémon dolls.

The hook? Some of these toys will be "retired," à la the incredibly successful Ty's Beanie Babies. The retired Hasbro playthings will make way for new toys down the line. "We see everything Pokémon as collectible," Hasbro's Holly Ingram says.

PLAY THINGS

THE COLLECTIBILITY FACTOR spills over to Nintendo's *Pokémon* Game Boy video game. Released September 28, the game comes in two versions, one "red" and the other "blue." Together, the games contain 150 monsters, but to collect them all, players need access to both versions.



OH, BOY It started as a hand-held video game (above); now there are Pokémon superballs (right).

This is mostly the same game that sold eight million copies in Japan. It requires players to capture and train pocket monsters such as Pikachu, Squirtle (a blue turtle), Bulbasaur (a blue-green toad-like beastie with a green bulb sprouting from his back) and the red, fire-tailed Charmander. Each pocket monster has its own set of strengths and weaknesses and can evolve into different forms; players gain access to other monsters by winning fights, trading or discovering the creatures in different game environments. The ultimate goal is to beat eight master Pokémon trainers to become "The World's Greatest Pokémon Trainer."

Later on, expect Nintendo to release *Pokémon Stadium* and the voice-recognition game *Pikachu Genkidechu* (players give commands to Pikachu via a microphone) for the Nintendo 64. In addition, *Pokémon Snap*, a game that asks users to "photograph" pocket monsters in their natural environments, may be released for Nintendo's writable magnetic disk drive add-on for the Nintendo 64.

Before Thanksgiving, Nintendo's Pokémon Pikachu, a hand-held virtual pet, will storm toy stores as well. The ever-cute Pikachu brushes its teeth, rides a

a Poké in the eye

Some shows just brag about rocking your world. "Pokémon"–an episode of which caused thousands of Japanese viewers to fall ill last year–apparently really can. In December 1997, millions of Japanese kids gathered around their TV sets to live the adventures of Ash and Misty. They were treated to a light show that sent more than 700 kids to the hospital with over-stimulated brains.

"Pokémon," quickly pulled off the air, returned four months later after new government guidelines for animated shows were released–and after Shogakugan examined every episode for similar phenomena.

Whether American viewers will ever see the episode of doom remains undecided. Some interest exists at Pioneer in releasing a "Pokémon" collection on DVD which would include the uncut episode in a locked portion of the disc, the idea being that adults who want to view it can get the code after agreeing not to hold anyone else responsible if their loved ones flip out upon viewing it. The DVD concept requires the blessing of Nintendo and 4Kids, and its chances don't appear promising. 4Kids' Norman Grossfeld says his company won't unleash the unmodified episode on the American public.

But that's not the end of the story. "The episode is actually pretty good," Grossfeld says, "and we'd like to release it in some form." The segment that caused the uproar is brief, and the episode easily salvageable. 4Kids considered releasing an excised version along with the regular TV season, according to Grossfeld, but ultimately decided that explaining to an easily excited media that the episode has been rendered harmless would be too much trouble.

It is more likely an edited version of the episode will be distributed on video, Grossfeld says. PS

tricycle and takes a bath. Its unique feature is a built-in meter that keeps track of how far a user walks. The greater the distance, the more "watts" a person can generate to keep his pet happy.

A collectible Pokémon card game from Wizards of the Coast will challenge players to capture, collect, train and fight pocket monsters. To reflect the rarity of some Pokémon, WotC promises the game's base set will be produced in limited quantities. The game is due in January 1999, with some 60 themed cards possibly released this November.

Pokémania?

THE SHEER AMOUNT OF POKÉMON merchandising is overwhelming, and the masses haven't even spoken yet. "There's a void in the children's market waiting to be filled by *something*," Flanagan says. "It's a market run on crazes...Pikachu could be the next big thing at Christmas."

There's still plenty more Pokémon to go around. 4Kids Productions has an agreement to produce two more seasons of the TV show. Viz Comics is gearing up to publish a variety of specialty books based on the pocket monsters. A Pokémon feature film, which just months ago knocked "Godzilla" right off movie screens in Tokyo, could be headed to the U.S. next summer if this fall's wave makes a big enough splash.

"Pokémon has an incredible attraction," Flanagan says. "I'm not sure what it is, but I'm not exactly immune, either. Kids just gravitate to it."

InQuest's Paul Sudlow and Wizard's Greg Orlando once caught colds, but never seem to nab pocket monsters.

Pokémon FAQ

The lowdown on Japan's newest import sensation

Q: WHO CARES ABOUT POKÉMON?

A: Everyone in Japan, for starters. Pokémon comics appear in six different compilation magazines reaching more than two million readers, eight million units of the video game have been bought, the cartoon is the highest-rated children's program, a million discs featuring the theme show have been sold, 600 different Pokémon products line store shelves and more than 400 million trading cards make the rounds between fans.

Q: WHAT IS POKÉMON?

A: A Japanese entertainment phenomenon coming to America. It encompasses comics, video games, cartoons, collectible merchandise and more. Pokémon is also the collective name for all 150 creatures waiting to be captured and trained to fight for players.

Q: WHEN IS POKÉMON COMIN'?

A: It's here now on TV. Keep your eye out any day for the comics, videos, games and merchandise.

Q: WHERE CAN I BUY POKÉMON?

A: Practically everywhere. The comics are coming to shops soon, the cartoon is syndicated nationally (check local listings), and merchandise can be found in retail outlets or as part of special promotions with such fast-food chains as KFC.

Q: HOW DO YOU PRONOUNCE POKÉMON?

A: POH-kay-mahn. It can be spelled without the accent, but pronunciation remains the same. The word itself translates to "pocket monsters."

Q: WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT POKÉMON?

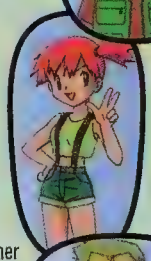
A: Because what began as just a game in Japan has taken that nation by storm. It could do the same in the United States, and you don't wanna be left behind, do ya?

TRENT D. McNEELEY

The Cast

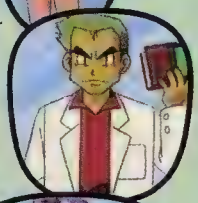
ASH Cheerful and determined, this 10-year-old boy wants to become the world's greatest Pokémon Master. He begins his long journey with a mouse-like Pokémon named Pikachu and two human companions, Brock and Misty.

PIKACHU Ash's first Pokémon, Pikachu (li'l yellow guy, below at left) doesn't think much of his human trainer at first, but eventually warms to him. Pikachu can be moody and sulky at times, but basks in attention. He is a Pokémon of the lightning element who speaks only his own language, but can understand the humans around him.

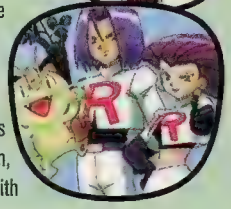


BROCK An expert in breeding and training Pokémon, Brock is one of eight Gym Leaders Ash must fight to become the best. A quiet guy, he favors Pokémon from the rock element.

MISTY An attractive girl, Misty isn't *quite* as young as she seems. She's actually a skilled Pokémon trainer and another Gym Leader whom Ash must best. Slightly vain but good-hearted, she also joins Ash on his journey. Misty prefers Pokémon from the water element.



PROFESSOR OAK The ultimate authority on Pokémon and their ways, Professor Oak gives advice to would-be Pokémon trainers.



TEAM ROCKET Comprising three bumbling bad guys bent on stealing ultra-rare Pikachu for their mysterious boss, this team often confronts Ash. Strong-willed and vain, humans James (center) and Jesse (right) tag-team with Meowth, a crafty Pokémon who–unlike all other Pokémon–can speak human languages. **PS**

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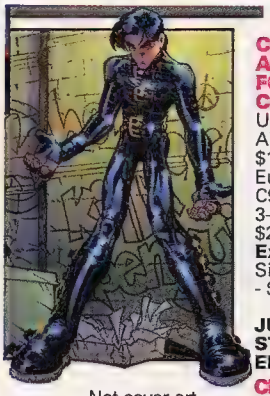

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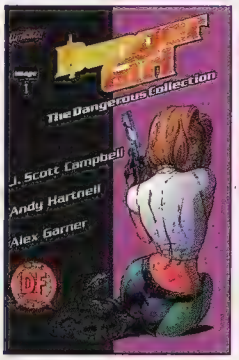

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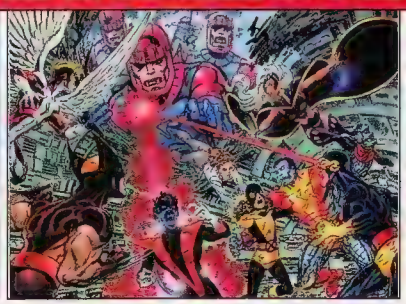

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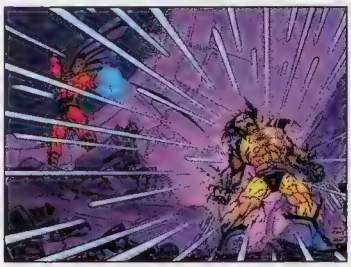

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Cat's Meow

Lured into comics by a random 'Batman' cartoon, writer DEVIN GRAYSON emerges as DC's wonder woman on 'Catwoman' and 'Titans'

Four years ago, Devin Grayson didn't read comic books. The *Catwoman* writer didn't even like them. In fact, the only comic Grayson can remember reading pre-'94 was an *Archie* book when she was around 10 years old.

That changed when she came home from work early one day and flipped on the television in her San Francisco apartment. Remote in hand, she began flipping through the channels and clicked into the middle of a "Batman: The Animated Series" episode. Batman and Robin were talking in the Batmobile, Grayson remembers; Robin had his feet propped up on the dashboard. They weren't in the middle of a big chase; they were just talking.

That's why she kept watching.

"I was fascinated," the now 28-year-old Grayson recalls, sitting in the basement office she's made in the Philadelphia home she shares with her boyfriend (and fellow comics writer) Mark Waid. She looks up and smiles at her cat, Nada-san, who's looking down from a perch atop the nearby computer monitor. "It was the first time I ever saw Batman as a father figure, the first time I'd ever thought, 'Hey. He raised someone.' I became absolutely fascinated by the relationship between Dick Grayson and Bruce Wayne. I wanted to get to know these characters. To get to know them, you have to go into their medium."

Grayson immersed herself in the culture of comics after that, and it's paid off—she's now one of the busiest writers in the business. Although Grayson's only been writing comics for three years, she has proved herself at DC Comics, scoring some high-profile gigs on *Catwoman* and the *Titans* ongoing that's launching in January. There's also the creator-owned DC monthly she's working on called *The Weinbergs*. Plus there's the *Black Widow* miniseries for Marvel Comics, due next spring.

"You're going to see me at a convention in a few years, white-haired and twitching," Grayson says, beginning to laugh. "I'll be screaming, 'Get me out of here!' But it's cool. I still like getting up and doing my job. Think about it: I'm officially allowed to make time to

By Chris Hutchins

GIVING PAWS Grayson (opposite with cat Nada-san) views Catwoman as a kleptomaniac, unable to relate to people.

chill out in Gotham City. I get to clear out a piece of my week to hang out with superheroes. I love that."

You can tell it, too, by walking around her office. It's an eclectic mess, partially because she and Waid (whom she met at last year's WonderCon) are planning a move to Brooklyn soon…and simply because, as Grayson puts it, "I like it this way." Stone gargoyles rest menacingly on cabinets and desk corners. An autographed photo of Julie Newmar—TV's Catwoman—proclaims, "To Devin: You're Fabulous!" A hand-made Batarang rests near her computer keyboard ("It's all Mark and I have for protection. We don't have any guns—this is a *Batman* house," Grayson says proudly). And the poster of Nightwing she bought the day she saw that "Batman" episode guards a wall.

Grayson is spunky and good-humored, but she takes her writing seriously. She makes musical "soundtrack" tapes of tunes she listens to when writing, themed for each title she's working on. "One of the best parts of getting a new assignment is making that tape," she says. "It sounds silly—playing a 90-minute tape over and over—but every 90 minutes, the theme of your work comes back to you. It's a nice way to remain focused." Concentrating on the angry, independent nature of Selina Kyle, Grayson's *Catwoman* tape sports ferocious tracks by female punkers L7—with a dash of Jane's Addiction's "Been Caught Stealing" added for good measure. The *Titans* soundtrack is a great collection of coming-of-age rock tunes, such as Third Eye Blind's "Graduate."

Focus is what got Grayson in the business in the first place. Just months after she channel-surfed her way into the comics culture in 1994, Grayson was calling DC's offices to do something—anything—in the comics business. "I pretty much pestered the editors for about two years. I knew I just had to write these characters," she recalls. "I told them I'd do anything: answer fan letters, sweep the floors. I just wanted to be closer to it and learn more. The DC editors were extremely kind and accessible." She gives an embarrassed grin here: "And they were probably amused by me at some level."

But Grayson got the last laugh. Her first assignment was in 1996 with a short *Batman Chronicles* #7 tale featuring Nightwing and his Titans teammate, Donna Troy. Things blossomed from there, and soon Grayson found herself writing more one-shot stories in *Chronicles* and other Bat-books. She scored the *Catwoman* gig and took over—unofficially, Grayson insists she's still considered "freelance"—as the ongoing writer with #54. Then came a *Superman Adventures* story, and last summer's *Nightwing/Huntress* mini-series.

Grayson feels her strongest talents lie in characterization. She views the characters as real people with their own agendas and what she calls "damage"—the emotional baggage that has shaped the them into who they are. When Grayson talks about Batman and Catwoman, it's as if they're real people. For the creative process to be genuine for her, she *has* to think of them that way. "I think of [writing] as being a conduit for the characters," she explains. "When I'm writing *Catwoman*, I don't think of myself as 'Devin Grayson, Representative Of All Womankind.' It's not about me at all. It's about the characters."

In the case of writing a character such as Catwoman, Grayson examines Selina Kyle's motives from all sides. Although readers could perceive the cat burglar as a villain, Grayson has another point of view.

"Catwoman is one of the purest archetypes: She's dark, female sexuality. Sure, she's a thief. She's a criminal, a criminal to her toes," Grayson says. "But a villain? No, I don't see her as one. I like to think of her as a kleptomaniac; I think the stealing is out of control. Because she doesn't have intimate relationships with people, she has them with objects."

The kleptomania angle will be explored early next year, during the Bat-books' "No Man's Land" story arc. It will arise from a nightmare Selina has in *Catwoman* #66. In the dream, Grayson says a DC character will damn her as a common thief, causing Catwoman to suspect she may have a problem.

Catwoman also will leave Gotham City next year on a vacation. "Selina decides to cut her losses and leave Gotham; the place has become a violent, unpredictable wasteland," Grayson says. "But she'll be coming back. She'll realize later that what she left was more than a wasteland. It's her home." And around issue #68, an established male DC Universe character will visit Catwoman and become a supporting character in the title. Grayson won't say who he is—when it comes to storylines, this writer loves keeping secrets.

As she takes a break from chatting about comics, Grayson smiles again at Nada-san, still sleepily peering down from her roost. Grayson loves these moments, virtually alone, with her music play-

MS. MARVEL Grayson will test the Marvel waters with a *Black Widow* mini-series for its Marvel Knights line in 1999.

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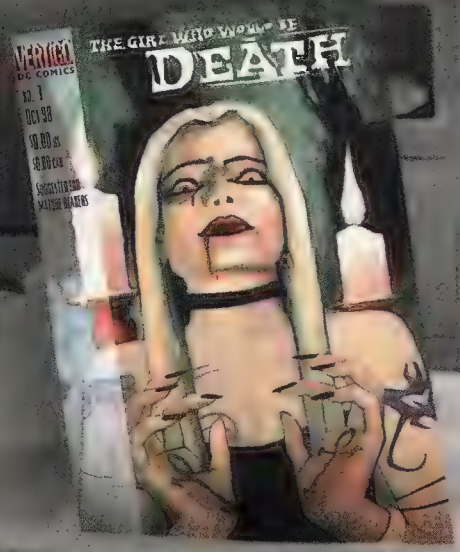

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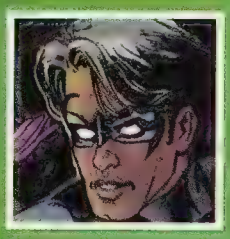
Grayson's Heroes

Don't call the Titans a bunch of second-stringers...at least not while writer Devin Grayson is around. She's spent months reading back issues to make sure her upcoming *Titans* series, launching in January, is loyal to the characters and keeps readers happy.

Here's her take on the personalities of the five core members of the team–and what motivates each of them.



NIGHTWING

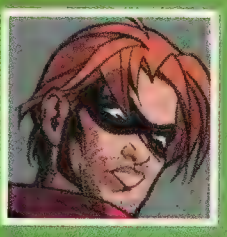
"Dick Grayson knows leading a team is time-consuming and stressful. But his conflict is he's a deeply responsible person; it's really hard to let this stuff happen without in some way checking in or watching over the people involved. When the team starts up, he has some serious questions about whether it's a good idea to start the Titans up again."

DONNA TROY

"Donna [first as Wonder Girl, then Troia] used to be the den mother, but we're not going to see a lot of that. She's been through a really difficult time lately. Basically, she's been told that she was [wiped from existence in *Wonder Woman* #134–#136], but then was restored through the memories of Wally [West, a.k.a. Flash]. When we start, she's going to be examining those issues. But she will have her Amazonian powers back...and some new ones."

THE FLASH

"Dick's busy, but Wally West's even busier. Not only does he have his own city to protect–if not the world–he's a member of the JLA *and* the Titans. He joins the Titans out of friendship. In a sense he makes a sacrifice, but he does it gracefully. There's no resentment there. But when the Titans start scheduling meetings at the same time the JLA does, that'll tick him off a little."



ARSENAL

"On some levels, Roy Harper would just be happy continuing to be his own man without the Titans. But he finds the dynamics pretty irresistible–not to mention the free rent [in their new HQ on Titans Island]. Since he's raising his baby daughter full-time, he knows you can't really get a better group of baby sitters than the Titans. He's a man who just kind of goes where his path takes him."

TEMPEST

"Tempest [a.k.a. Garth] is a man with something to prove. He's another one of the members who'd just as soon do his own thing, but he's gaining a sense of confidence, although he may be the quietest one on the team. He becomes the Titans' treasurer. That's a new position for him, and he'll find he has more of a voice than he ever had before." ■ CH

ing on the headphones and dialogue dancing in her brain. There's a soup bowl by her keyboard filled with small Post-It notes of dialogue that have come to her while writing: "I use a lot of this later. I just hear it and write it down," she says.

The bowl will see a lot more use next year, considering Grayson's workload. First on the menu is Grayson's dream project, DC's new *Titans* series, launching in January. "[DC editor] Eddie Berganza put it like this when he pitched the idea to me: 'Could we possibly interest you in writing *Titans*?' " she says, raising her eyebrows knowingly. "He knew damn well that I'd be ecstatic about that. I can remember him saying, 'Are you cool with that?' I almost fainted. I'm insanely excited about this."

Grayson glows when she talks about *Titans* but doesn't want to give too much away. Here's some info she would spill: The five founding members—Nightwing, Flash, Tempest, Arsenal and Donna Troy (formerly Wonder Girl, with a new code name pending copyright approval)—will be on the team, as well as a second wave of former Titans (she's not saying who yet). Big threats are planned, along with some intra-team romance...and a theme that Grayson explores in much of her work: family.

"When I talk about family, I'm talking about the concept—not genetics," Grayson explains. "It's the kind you search out; the people you look for throughout your life who allow you to be as much yourself as possible. Dick Grayson and Donna Troy are so clearly that for each other. In fact, all the Titans are. That's why *Titans* is such a dream job for me. It resonates of that feeling: 'Yeah! We're going to be there for each other no matter what, because we don't have anyone else.' "

> "I became fascinated by the relationship between Dick Grayson and Bruce Wayne. It was the first time I ever saw Batman as a father figure."
>
> —Devin Grayson

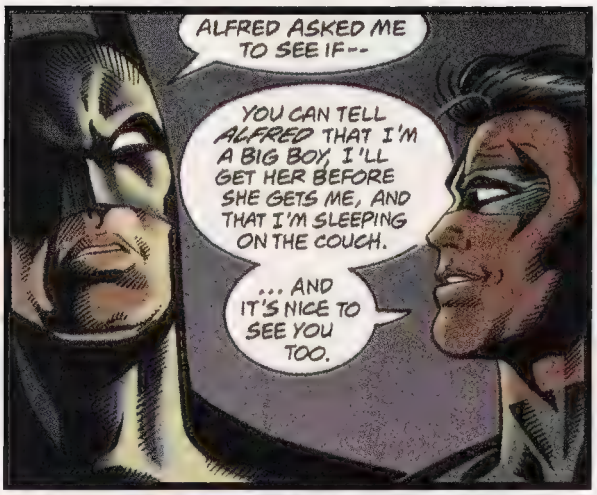
The Titans will be doing more than bonding; they'll be taking on some familiar villains. The terrorist group HIVE will return with a new leader and a new mission: to rid the world of all superpowered beings. A Titans version of the Injustice Gang will form, too—led by the immortal megalomaniac Vandal Savage. Expect to see an all-new villain named Goth to surface around issue #3, as well as guest appearances galore.

"It's a really powerful team, something that can be problematic," she continues. "You start looking at a threat and you have to say, 'Whoa. Just one of these guys could handle this.' But that's the interesting part. If one of them could take this down, why are they working together? They can work alone. But they come together and explore the needs in one another's lives. That's family to me."

Grayson's writing duties don't end with Selina Kyle or the twenty-something Titans. She's also closed a deal with Marvel to work on a *Black Widow* mini-series, due next spring.

A few months ago, Marvel editors Jimmy Palmiotti and Joe Quesada spoke to Grayson about doing a Widow mini for their darker, character-reviving Marvel Knights line, the storyline up to Grayson. Grayson actually hesitated at the opportunity, fearing she would be typecasting herself a "female character only" writer.

"I don't want my work evaluated that way," she says, the concern seeping into her voice for a moment. "Writing comic books isn't about writing *male* and *female* characters. It's about writing



FATHER & SON Grayson thanks Batman and the former Robin for luring her to comics.

characters. Sure, I feel responsible for talking about the realities of gender bias in comics, but at the same time, I really don't want my work evaluated that way. I have fans who come up to me and say, 'You should write...' and they list of a dozen female characters. I wince at that."

In the end, a good story idea—and the love of the character—brought Grayson around. Primarily a DC reader, the character of Black Widow (along with Gambit and Captain America's Sharon Carter) is one of the few Marvel characters she really knows something about. The story for the mini-series goes like this: Black Widow, a former Russian spy, is investigating a super-serum smuggling ring. During the adventure, a young woman confronts her, wanting to take the title of Black Widow for herself.

"Black Widow really has to think about defending that," Grayson says. "I mean, she'd been at this spy thing for a while. Is it time to retire? That's the theme of the story: aging."

While *Widow* may be a fun journey into spyville, Grayson's proudest creation is her creator-owned, in-DC-Universe-continuity series scheduled to debut in May, *The Weinbergs*. "It's really the most purely 'me' thing out there," Grayson says with a laugh. "It's straight out of my sick little head." The concept? A family of five teenagers with superpowers travel the DCU in a Winnebago, exploring their new superheroic lives...while dealing with the death of their parents.

"They decide to take to the road, become superheroes and never look back," Grayson says. "So you have a bunch of kids taking on DC supervillians. It's going to be really fun—but at the same time, it's a very tragic story. This isn't *Batman* and *Superman*, where the resolution comes easily. Ultimately, they're going to have to face those realities on the road. It's basically 'Party of Five' meets *Teen Titans* meets 'Road Rules.'"

Grayson laughs, an infectious staccato that bounces off the walls. She knows her professional status hinges on a chance encounter, a lot of "pestering" and hard work. She knows how fortunate she is to be this successful this quickly. And she knows how *cool* her job really is.

"My favorite question I've ever fielded is, 'What characters do you want to work with?' And I just smile because I've already done it," she says. "I'm working with characters I've always wanted to do. As a fangirl, I sometimes scream, 'You're joking!' when I think about all this. I still sometimes think it's all an elaborate hoax and someone's going to say, 'The show's over, babe.'"

Maybe. But only if Grayson lets go of the remote.

Kentucky-based writer Chris Hutchins' life is basically "Groovy Ghoulies" meets Atari Force *meets "Sailor Moon."*

BEMUSED Serenaded by his "Batman" cartoon creation Harley Quinn, Dini (opposite) and his team have redefined the Dark Knight to a new generation.

AUT dini

'Batman' and 'Superman' cartoon producer **PAUL DINI** looks to the future with 'Batman Beyond' and several comic collaborations with Alex Ross

THE WIZARD Q&A

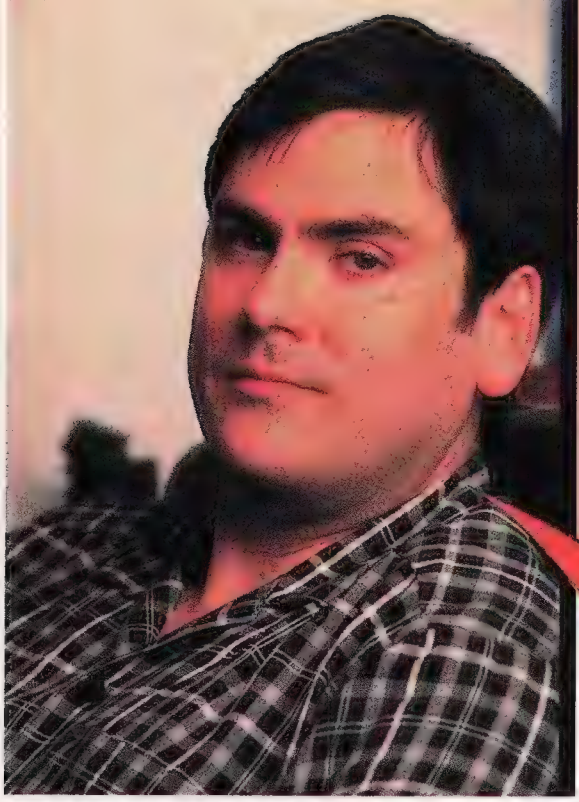
BY TOM RUSSO • PHOTOS BY ROBERT BECK

Few writers have redefined Batman. Frank Miller is one of them. Denny O'Neil, too. And Paul Dini.

If the third name on that list leaves you scratching your head, it shouldn't. After all, not many can say *his* Batman is seen by an audience of more than two million people. That *his* Batman has won numerous prestigious awards, Emmys included. That *his* Batman will be the one painted in a book by superstar Alex Ross to celebrate the character's 60th anniversary in 1999.

Dini is one of the guys who makes the "Batman" animated series the standout TV show it is, with credits as a story editor, producer and writer (he's penned a quarter of the hero's 100-plus episodes). He's also left his mark with identical credits on the "Superman" animated series (also an Emmy winner) and is currently reinventing the Dark Knight Detective's future in the new "Batman Beyond" cartoon on the Kids' WB. And in his spare time, he's a comic book writer whose credits include several animated-style Batman comics, notably 1993's Eisner and Harvey award-winning *Batman: Mad Love*. His latest comic masterstroke is November's *Superman: Peace on Earth*, the first of several planned collaborations with Ross.

Not that all this good fortune has gone to his head. At once both chatty and slightly embarrassed at occupying the spotlight, Dini's got a shyness about him that's hard not to like. For someone who's really just a fanboy at heart, he seems surprisingly comfortable with the creative and cultural slickness of Hollywood, all the way down



VITAL STATS

NAME: Paul Dini
OCCUPATION: Writer-producer on the "Batman" and "Superman" animated series, as well as the new series "Batman Beyond"
BORN: Aug. 7, 1959, New York City; grew up in Northern California
BASE OF OPERATIONS: Los Angeles
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Animating DC's heroes on his signature shows; winning Emmys for his work as story editor on "Batman" and "Tiny Toons"; writing various comics for DC in the animated style of the shows, including the award-winning 1993 one-shot *Batman: Mad Love*.
WHY JOKER WON'T KILL HARLEY QUINN: "What's going to hurt Harley more–to just shoot her or to withhold affection from her? Joker knows that's what will do the most damage. Never, ever give her what she wants–that, to him, is the joke."

to his trendy beatnik specs. Yet, at the same time, for someone who's a Hollywood creature by profession, and who in college aspired to be an actor, he sure does fit in well with the comic-con crowd.

Paying Dini a visit at the Warner Bros. TV animation headquarters in Los Angeles only underscores his improbable image as a showbiz-and-comics "player." Cramped as his work space is, it's hardly a power office—"My couch is my filing system," he laughs while rooting through some clutter in search of proofs for his new coffee-table tome, *Batman: Animated*, a behind-the-scenes look at the show. The place isn't even on the Warner's lot, but in a mall complex known chiefly as the local hangout in the '80s teen flick "Fast Times at Ridgemont High." But in all the details—from the modestly camouflaged plaques and trophies to the animation cels stacked on the floor because there are too damn many of 'em to hang on the walls—this is clearly an office of powerful ideas and flights of imagination. Here, Dini shares a few.

WIZARD: So what's the lowdown on "Batman Beyond"?

DINI: When Bruce Wayne started to get older, which we envision as about 20 years after the current series, he found that he wasn't able to perform as capably anymore as Batman. So he created this supersuit to wear that would help him. It had retractable wings and was bulletproof, laserproof and magnetized to allow him to hang upside down like a real bat. But it also had such a kick that the first time he wore it, it gave him a heart attack. So around age 60, he took the suit off for good, hung it up in the Batcave and left it there. And there it stays for another 20 years until [novice teen hero] Terry McGinnis basically steals it and uses it to go avenge an injustice in his life.

And so we have our new Batman. How closely will all of this be tied to the original series?

If you're a longtime fan, the natural tendency with a show like this is to want to know where the Joker is, where Robin is, where Nightwing is...and we're purposely not answering a lot of those questions. For right now we really don't want the audience to need to have seen the old "Batman" shows

FUTURE SHOCK When an elderly Bruce Wayne (bottom left) retires as Batman in "Batman Beyond," Terry McGinnis suits up in his place (bottom right and top).

SEARCHING THE GLOBE Dini was hand-picked by painter Alex Ross to write *Superman: Peace on Earth.*

to enjoy the new show. What's important is to establish the relationship between Terry and Bruce, and to make sure that works before we start reintroducing old characters or filling in what happened to everybody in those 30 to 40 years between series. One thing I can tell you is that Commissioner Gordon is still around in Gotham City—but it's actually Barbara Gordon.

And your chief bad guy is...

Derek Powers. He's a rising billionaire industrialist who's an antagonistic partner in Wayne Industries, thanks to a hostile merger. At a point early in our story, one of Powers' schemes to unseat Bruce comes back on him and he's transformed into this creature called Blight, who's basically a radioactive man. His skin becomes transparent, you can see his bones underneath, and anything he touches is infected and can die.

Any other new characters on "Batman Beyond"?

We're introducing the Royal Flush Gang into the show. We always wanted to do them for "Batman" or "Superman" episodes, but we never found the right story. Here they'll be more futuristic villains—they'll use flying playing cards as vehicles and have a more sophisticated look. Oh, and something that we resurrected from the old Batman comics of the '50s that's actually a lot of fun is Ace the Bat-Hound. Not that he wears a mask and fights alongside Batman; Bruce is now a recluse, and his only companion is this massive, *Hound of the Baskervilles*-type dog named Ace. Then we have a new character called Inque, a shapeshifter who can morph into this shiny black shadow, which makes her a perfect corporate spy. We have a street gang called the Jokers, who have elements of the original Joker, but not so that we're just doing Joker 2000. And there's a superheroine called Freon. That's an episode that should be a lot of fun for die-hard comic fans because it introduces a new superteam that seems to have, ah, close parallels to a certain other [DC] superteam out there.

We'll guess that that "certain other superteam" is the JLA. Speaking of which, how did you decide on this particular series concept as opposed to doing a new series with, say, the JLA or Flash or Green Lantern?

Among ourselves, [producers] Alan Burnett, Bruce Timm and I develop a lot of things. We've looked at pretty much every DC Comics property, and there are a lot of characters we'd like to work with. We worked up a development for a Catwoman solo show that we liked an awful lot. But what it comes down to is what the WB wants to buy. The higher-ups stress to us at every opportunity that it is the *Kids'* WB—that's who they're targeting, so they would like to see shows [such as "Batman Beyond"] that have more of a kid appeal. Also, you're dealing with folks at the network who know Superman and Batman. Aquaman? Probably not. So it doesn't boil down to not wanting to do the Justice League, or that we don't think we can—we're just dealing with a marketplace where there's very little room for experimentation.

Do you know how many more seasons you're likely to do "Batman" and "Superman"?

Well, we're not on any sort of set "season." We like to produce new episodes every year, but we're heavily into "Batman Beyond" now, so "Batman" and "Superman" are both sort of on hiatus at the moment. We tend to work on each show one at a time. But it looks very likely that we're going to keep "Batman" and "Superman" going for some time to come.

They're obviously different shows despite their visual similarities. Which "Superman" episodes do you feel have worked best, given the differences?

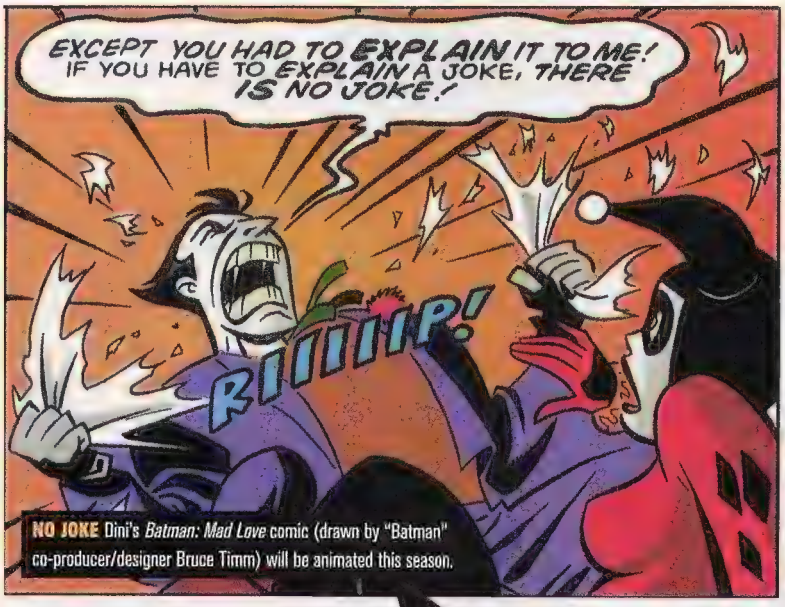
The Lobo episodes. You have the ultimate boy scout and the ultimate jerk. They don't like each other at all, so when they're thrown together, there's a lot of energy to their relationship. We found that Superman really grew as a character when you played him against somebody like that. That's another reason why, when everybody asks us, "When are you gonna do the Justice League?" it's like, think about what you're asking. You really run the risk of having it become "Super Friends" when it's a bunch of characters who all get along standing around in capes and masks talking about saving the world.

So, what's in store for "Batman" and "Superman" this season?

Well, in the 11 new Batman shows, we've gone back and used a lot of our recurring villains. [*EDITOR'S NOTE: Because air dates had yet to be finalized at press time, some of the episodes listed here may already have aired.*] There's a lot more Joker, more Harley, and a couple of Poison Ivy stories. We'll see the Creeper, who's going to have a big romantic fixation on Harley—but even though he's [another] pale-skinned, green-haired, laughing maniac, she doesn't want anything to do with him because he'd treat her too well. And there's a new character called Roxy Rocket who Bruce and I created for *Batman Adventures Annual* #1 a couple of years back. She's a daring-to-the-point-of-psychotic stuntwoman with a '30s aviator look who flies around on a Buck Rogers-style rocket. She develops this weird fixation on Batman, then shows up in an episode of "Superman" causing trouble for him, too.

You're actually doing a couple more "World's Finest" crossovers too, right?

Yeah, we're doing one where Batman and Superman take on Ra's al Ghul, and another where Batman is missing and Superman has to fill in for him. In that one, the criminals have such a field day with



NO JOKE Dini's *Batman: Mad Love* comic (drawn by "Batman" co-producer/designer Bruce Timm) will be animated this season.

Batman gone that some of them have to branch out to Metropolis instead, which alerts Superman. It has the most villains we've ever put into one episode—dozens of 'em.

This is also the year where you've finally done that long-anticipated adaptation of *Mad Love* for "Batman." What took you guys so long?

For a long time we felt that it was fine just as it was, as a comic book. But we just liked the story so much that, over time, we wondered how it would work in animation. Also, various elements that we've introduced in the cartoon have been used for the feature films or as a springboard for other people's stories, and we had no control. We began to think, "Well, if they do wind up using Harley, we'd like to do our own screen version of the story [first], and make it as true as we can to the comic." We didn't really add anything, we just played everything more toward the confrontation between Harley, Batman and the Joker, because that's where the real dramatic energy is.

You and DC's Bat-office recently announced plans to introduce Harley into mainstream DC Universe continuity.

Right, as part of the "No Man's Land" story arc. I'll probably write a couple of issues that introduce her and, depending on what my schedule is like, I'd also like to write some other story elements or come up with ideas for ways they can use her. She's probably not going to be as out-and-out homicidal as other characters in the mainstream Batman books, but she was never intended to be bad, anyway. I think fans who like her will like this version, too.

There's been a lot of buzz about your upcoming project with Alex Ross, a treasury-edition-size book called *Superman: Peace on Earth*. What's it about?

It's a more introspective Superman story, with something of a holiday theme to it. You don't often see Superman trying to confront a real problem. We know he can save a crashing plane or beat up Braniac. But what if he decided, "There's going to be one day in the year where I make sure no one in the world goes hungry"? This doesn't have Lois Lane, supervillains or any of the current storylines in it—it's much more an all-audiences story. The temptation when you work with someone like Alex is to do the big story—you want to do *Marvels*, you want to do *Kingdom Come*, you want to have him paint every character in the DC Universe because he makes them look so damn cool. But this is more in the vein of *Uncle Sam*—which isn't a bad way to play the character.

And ideally we want to do four books, one a year, where we tell stories about the great superheroes. Each of the books will come out during the character's 60th anniversary, so next will be Batman, then Captain Marvel and then Wonder Woman. You're going to see smaller, more thoughtful stories that remind people why these are important characters.

Any other comics work on the horizon?

Bruce and I are doing a three-issue miniseries, *Harley and Ivy*, that will be out around the middle of next year. They're not exactly sophisticated stories, but they're very sexy, very racy and a lot of fun. But I'm also experimenting with some of my own characters. I'm doing a book for Bongo Comics that's coming out early next year, a really weird funny-animal book called *Emu and Thylacine*. The characters are a little like Road Runner and Coyote, and the book deals with what happens to them offscreen: They're best friends, they live in

Hollywood, and they both have really crappy lives. [*Laughs*] Then I'm doing a strip for a special one-shot, boy-produced issue of Sarah Dyer's *Action Girl Comics*. It's a weird combination of Buck Rogers and Roy Rogers called "Mutant, Texas," about a little town that was blown off the map 50 years ago, where life re-evolved [in the form of] strange animals. And it looks like I'm going to do a couple of books for Oni Press [including] a story based on the high school I went to, which I'm calling either *Rich Kids in Prep School* or *Wastes of Skin*, and then for Christmas of '99, *Jingle Belle*. The character is Santa's kid, but she hates it—she's 16 and she'd rather be off snowboarding or meeting Eskimo boys.

Sounds like a plan.

I just want to do something that's accessible to all ages, something like *Bone* or *Scary Godmother* or *Usagi Yojimbo*. I want the audience that would have read "Bloom County," that just wants to pick up a comic because it's funny and a bit adult, but not too explicit.

Some people would say you already managed to pull in that all-ages audience when you helped put "Batman" on the air—and that in the process, you really have defined Batman for generations to come.

You know, I wish I could step into a time machine and see how the artistic vision of "Batman" shapes 7-year-old kids who watch the show now and grow up to become artists and writers and filmmakers. Because I think it is going to have a far-reaching influence on their imaginations. It feels really good to work on something that you have a gut feeling is going to endure as well as the Fleischer "Superman" cartoons [from the '40s] or "Looney Tunes"—things that kids really enjoy at a certain time of their life and then think of fondly later. The greatest success a cartoon can have, I think, is when it's enjoyed by kids *and* adults. That's what entertainment of this nature should be about. (W)

L.A.-based writer Tom Russo would rather not think about the far-reaching influence "Super Friends" had on him, *Gleek you very much.*

CARTOON NETWORKING

For Paul Dini, the road to "Batman" meandered through plenty of other toontown districts first. Beginning with his earliest writing gigs while he was still a student at Boston's Emerson College, Dini racked up such wide-ranging credits as "Shazam," "Tarzan," "Dungeons and Dragons," "Fat Albert," "Ewoks," "Droids" and "Tiny Toons." Along the way, he rubbed elbows and/or funny bones with some pretty interesting people, among them:

GEORGE LUCAS

"George wanted to do animated spinoffs of 'Star Wars,' but this was in that cooling-off period after the movies, so the shows missed out on the intensity of the spinoff novels and comics that have come out since. But I look upon my four years on 'Ewoks' and 'Droids' as my film-school days, because I got to learn everything I now know about [animation]."

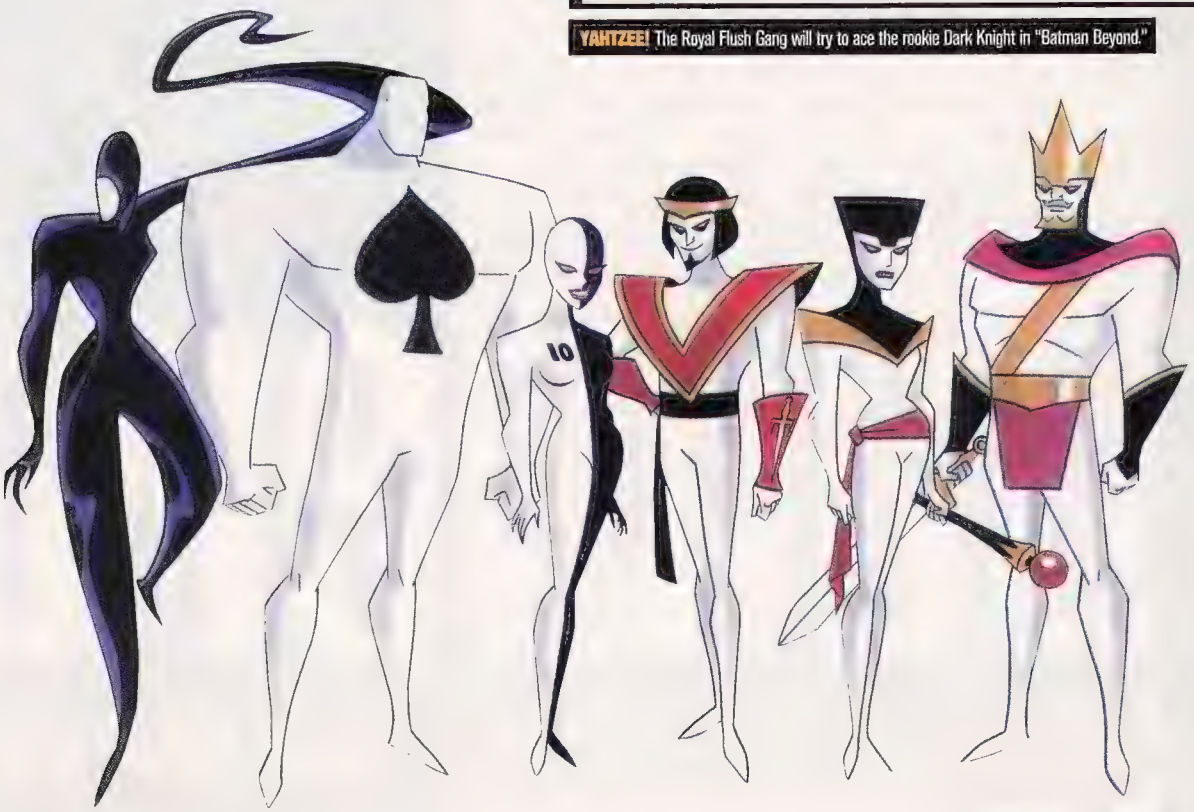
STEVEN SPIELBERG

"Steven showed a lot of interest in going back and somehow revisiting the classic 'Looney Tunes' characters, so 'Tiny Toons' was a great opportunity to work with him. He was very much in love with the idea of the old-fashioned way that cartoons were created, so whenever he had time, he'd sit in on storyboard sessions and make contributions to the process. And he was very accessible–he would come in with very definite ideas of what he wanted to do but he was also open to suggestions. Whatever made us laugh. That was a definite plus."

BILL COSBY

"'Fat Albert' was the first thing I ever wrote. And as a kid who grew up listening to Cosby records incessantly, it was like a dream come true: 'I get to work with Cosby? Great!' He'd come in, do the recording, and then vanish very quickly, but it was still like, 'I wrote a joke that Cosby said! Woo-haaa!'" ■ **TR**

YAHTZEE! The Royal Flush Gang will try to ace the rookie Dark Knight in "Batman Beyond."



VILLAINS ARE NUTS. Totally screwy. Completely bonkers. No, you don't need a Ph.D. in psychology to figure that one out. But it certainly can't hurt.

Since none of us around here have doctorates, *Wizard* tracked down Dr. Stuart Fischoff, a tenured professor of media psychology at California State University, Los Angeles. Fischoff agreed to probe the confused minds of comic books' greatest supervillains. In other words, use his psychological expertise to figure out comics' craziest kooks.

And we couldn't have found a better shrink. Not only was Fischoff willing to analyze these full-color cretins, but he even once debated Batman's psychological condition on "The Larry King Show." Fischoff knows his villains and he's quick to point out a commonly shared trait among them all: "They give a bad name to true psychotics."

"In the real world, the vast majority of people who have been diagnosed with psychotic disorders of one type or another are not violent," he says. "Most real criminals do have personality disorders or traumatic events in their lives, but they are not usually psychotic in the clinical sense. It used to be, most hard-core villains were portrayed as simply being nuts, without much time spent on deep, core issues that brought these traits to the surface. That has started to change, but most of them still tend to be portrayed as psychotic, rather than having issues that turned them to a life of crime."

What follows are our psychological case studies of some of the most despicable villains in comics.

DR. DOOM

REAL NAME: Victor Von Doom

CASE HISTORY: Born to gypsy parents in Latveria, the subject lost his mother and father at a young age, and swore to make the world suffer. He grew up mastering the mystic arts and building a rep as a brilliant scientist. In college, he met Reed Richards who discovered a miscalculation in Von Doom's work, which resulted in Doom scarring his face. Running to Tibet, an order of monks took the subject under its wing and built him a suit of armor and a metal mask. Calling himself Dr. Doom, this would-be world conqueror is constantly thwarted by the Fantastic Four.

ANALYSIS: Though driven by many obsessions, including hatred for the Fantastic Four's Reed Richards, Doom's primary obsession in life—which he eventually did resolve—was his quest to free his long-dead mother from the Netherworld where she dwelt. This was clearly a case of "strong Oedipal fixations on his

DOOM NEEDS NO MAN! But he sure would like to have his mommy back, a psychoanalysis would reveal.

DANGERO

COMICS' VILEST VILLAINS SLINK INTO THE P

us minds

ychiatrist's chair · BY michael goldman

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADER

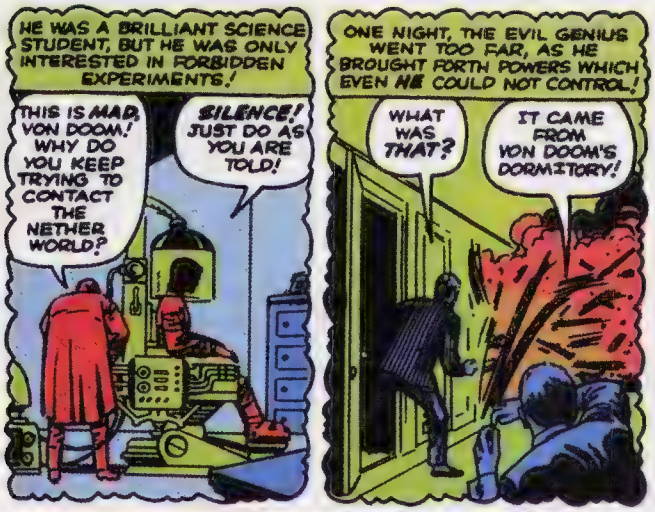
Doctor's Credentials

NAME: Dr. Stuart Fischoff
AGE: 58
BASE OF OPERATIONS: Lives and works in Los Angeles, Calif., as a professor at California State University
DEGREES: Master's and bachelor's degrees from Penn State
TV APPEARANCES: Appeared on more than 500 TV shows discussing psychology of popular culture and personalities, most notably "The Larry King Show"
COMIC HISTORY: "I used to love them. What boy didn't? I followed most of the big titles in my day, but I tended to like the strange stuff, like *Tales from the Crypt* and *Mad* magazine."
VILLAIN HE'D MOST LIKE TO TREAT: "I'd like to analyze Mxyzptlk, to see if his personality is as mixed up as his name."

mother," says Fischoff in reference to the Freudian term for a child strongly attached to a parent of the opposite sex.

"Because Dr. Doom finds such thoughts unacceptable, he wishes to sanitize his feelings, and therefore has decided to externalize the blame onto the rest of the world," explains Fischoff. "Therefore, he feels the rest of the world is evil. His hatred of Reed Richards is a good example. Reed tried to warn him that his machine was not sound scientifically, and he turns around and blames Reed when the thing blows up.

"His whole approach is called defensive projection: 'I can't be wrong, therefore you must be wrong.'"



DOOMED FROM THE START Von Doom has never been much on input from others.

TREATMENT: Doom might very well benefit from deep psychoanalysis. Once he accepts treatment, however, one big problem remains. "Doom would quickly kill any analyst who suggests he has an unhealthy fixation on his mother," says Fischoff. "So I'm not about to volunteer for the job."

The Joker

REAL NAME: Unknown
CASE HISTORY: Details are sketchy, but the "Clown Prince of Crime" apparently once lived a normal life as a down-and-out comedian. Desperate for cash, he agreed to help some crooks knock off a chemical plant. When his pregnant wife was killed the night before the break-in, the subject began losing all hope for a happy life. The vigilante Batman foiled the robbery, reportedly forcing the subject into a vat of chemicals. Horribly disfigured, the subject has become convinced that life is one big, meaningless joke, and has killed thousands of people in his murderous career.

ANALYSIS: Since the subject is a cold-blooded, psychotic murderer whose only joy in life appears to be killing and disfiguring Batman's loved ones, he might be beyond help.

"To the degree that the Joker was ever sane and cared about anything," says Fischoff, "he has gone so far off that path that if he had any sanity left he would be so overcome by guilt and torment over his sins, he would probably be suicidal."

Sanity aside, it's doubtful that the Joker could ever be convinced to give up his lifestyle. Mayhem and murder are his entire world. Quite simply, it's what he's good at.

"If the story of the Joker's origin is true, then he was a complete failure in the real world," says Fischoff. "He couldn't hold down a job or even take care of his wife. Therefore, the only part of his life where he has ever enjoyed any success is as a supercriminal. That's why he associates civilized behavior with failure, and crime with success."

TREATMENT: "It is extremely unlikely at this point that you could rehabilitate this person through therapy," says Fischoff.

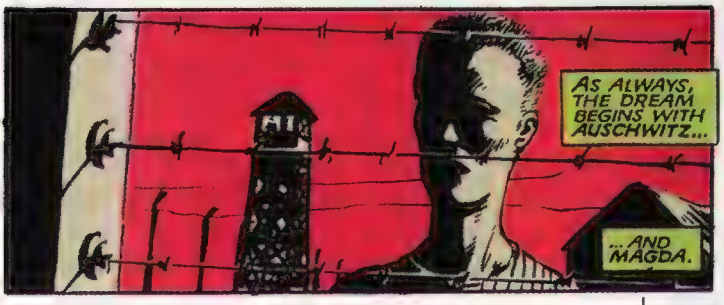
Extreme measures such as advanced brainwashing techniques might be the Joker's best hope, says Fischoff. "If there was some way to remind him of those he once did love before he became the Joker, then maybe there would be hope," says Fischoff. "If they could bring those memories back and see if there is something there he could hook onto besides crime, there could be progress."

NO JOKE His all-too-typical failures in life (below) led to the Joker's insanity (top).

magneto

REAL NAME: Unknown/alias Erik Magnus Lehnsherr

CASE HISTORY: Losing his entire family in the Auschwitz concentration camp during the Nazi occupation of Poland, the subject eventually married and had a daughter. When he was prevented from saving his daughter from a fire, Erik's mutant ability to manipulate magnetic fields manifested. Dubbed Magneto, he longs to see mutants supplant humans and has crossed paths numerous times with the mutant superteam the X-Men.



ANALYSIS: The subject is a functioning paranoid. Traumatic memories of the Holocaust clearly sparked Magneto's belief that humans will always turn on those different from themselves. Therefore, mutants must take protective measures to ensure humanity never destroys or enslaves them. That's why Magneto will always be suspicious of normal humans.

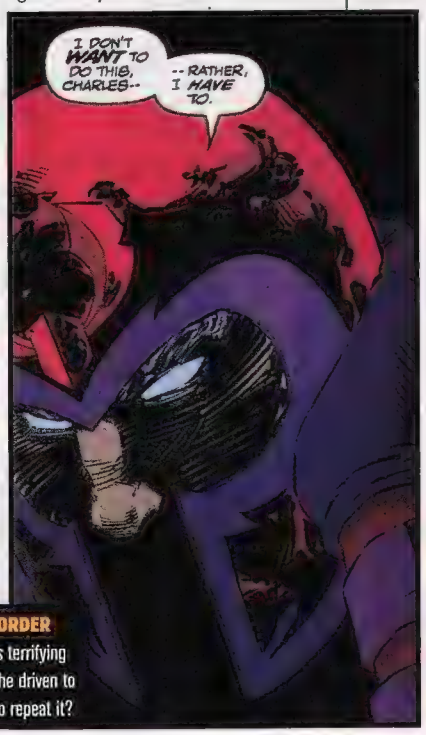
"His assessment of the human race is not far off, if you look at history," says Fischoff. "It's a timeless theme and, therefore, he has reason to fear for the mutant race."

Magneto's belief system is also timeless: The ends justify the means. Sure, mutants are persecuted daily by humans, but Magneto doesn't want equality, he wants dominance. And if he has to conquer and hurt humanity in the process, so be it.

"When he is thinking in those terms, Magneto is no different than Stalin or hundreds of authoritarian leaders throughout history," says Fischoff. "They might have a noble purpose, but they are willing to sacrifice anything or anyone to achieve that purpose. That remains Magneto's disturbing side: that grandiosity."

TREATMENT: The key to treating Magneto lies in helping him shed some of his paranoia. The best way to do that, says Fischoff, is by using therapy that encourages him to spend time with people who accept him as a mutant.

Ultimately, though, the subject will have to "start looking at what he has in common with humans, not what is different between them," says Fischoff. "Psychologists call that an integrative, rather than a disintegrative, training program. Until that happens, he will always have a social prejudice against non-mutants."



MAGNETIC PERSONALITY DISORDER Magneto's paranoia is based on his terrifying experiences as a child (above). Is he driven to prevent a recurrence or destined to repeat it?

catwoman

REAL NAME: Selina Kyle

CASE HISTORY: Orphaned at a young age, Selina survived on Gotham's harsh streets through crime and prostitution. After learning a number of martial arts skills and observing Batman, the subject became inspired to create a cat-like costume and become Gotham City's greatest cat burglar.

ANALYSIS: The underlying cause beneath Selina's criminal lifestyle is quite common: childhood abuse. The subject's mother abandoned her, her father drank himself to death and her headmistress abused her.

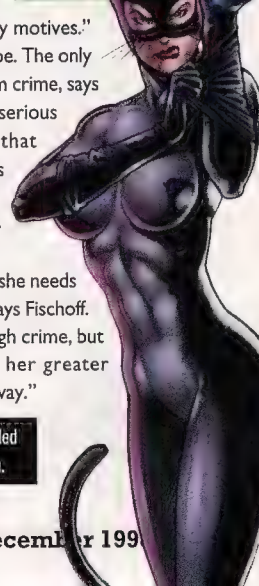
"Do all people who grow up in such environments turn to crime? Of course not," says Fischoff. "But there is a clear relationship between an abusive childhood and the kind of anger and hostility that causes anti-social behavior as an adult. People who have these experiences are therefore faced with choices as they get older. If the lesson is that no one will look out for you, you have to look out for yourself, then the choice is often to pursue criminal behavior, as Catwoman did."

Selina also exhibits the occasional "good" behavior, though. She has rescued homeless street girls and saved people trapped under debris from an earthquake. But her motives may not always be so pure, warns Fischoff.

"When she helps a lost girl, Catwoman is addressing her own demons," he says. "But helping them actually gives her a chance to show even more hostility because it gives her a chance to beat up a pimp or a drug dealer. The problem is, she will do the same thing against good people. She will vent her hostility against anyone she wants, good or bad, and that means she does not have healthy motives."

TREATMENT: There is hope. The only way to lure the subject away from crime, says Fischoff, is to get her into some serious therapy. Selina needs to see that something of greater value lies down the road for her if she switches to "the road of righteousness."

"She needs ego gratification; she needs to bolster her self-confidence," says Fischoff. "She has always done that through crime, but a good therapist could show her greater rewards if she goes a different way."



GRITTY KITTY An abusive childhood led to Catwoman's (right) criminal lifestyle.

Dr. Octopus

SPLIT DECISION Doc Ock has dual personalities.

REAL NAME: Otto Octavius

CASE HISTORY: A brilliant and timid scientist in the field of nuclear science, Octavius created a harness with four tentacle-like arms to help him handle radioactive materials. When an accident created a psychic link between Octavius and the harness, he turned aggressive and began a life of crime as Dr. Octopus.

ANALYSIS: The dichotomy of Octavius' dual personalities is the key to his psychological treatment.

"His original timidity, which can return in certain situations if he is traumatized, suggests a softness that might make it possible to reach Dr. Octopus and turn his life around," suggests Fischoff. "But he always seems to revert to the aggressive crime boss at some point, and that is because his timid state reminds him of his own limitations, and he can't bear that."

As for why the dichotomy exists, Fischoff suggests that the subject may be attempting to satisfy some "long-ago, unresolved sibling rivalry or issue with his father." This would not only account for Octavius' original fearfulness and feelings of self-doubt, but his newly found aggressiveness as well.

TREATMENT: Before he can end his reign of terror, Octavius must confront his original self. But before any of that occurs, a simple medical checkup is necessary.

"First thing they should do is give him a CT scan to see if he has a brain tumor or other wound to the brain," says Fischoff. "That could account for the rage he periodically experiences. The lab accident that gave him his arms obviously gave him some type of brain damage, so if the damage is too severe, there might be nothing you can do, other than locking him up."

If Octavius' brain passes the test, psychoanalysis is next on the charts. "There are certain cognitive behavioral approaches—actually teaching him to think about things in a different manner—you might try," says Fischoff. "Since he was a brilliant scientist, they might be able to show he could gain more fame and power by returning to his research than by trying to take over the New York crime syndicates."

Lex Luthor

POWER PLAY When Superman arrived, Lex (right) got knocked down a peg or two.

REAL NAME: Lex Luthor

CASE HISTORY: The self-made founder of the high-tech LexCorp business, Luthor is a billionaire super-genius. As such, he was the celebrity of Metropolis—until Superman hit town. Since his business deals are not always honorable or legal, Superman has vowed to bring Luthor to justice.

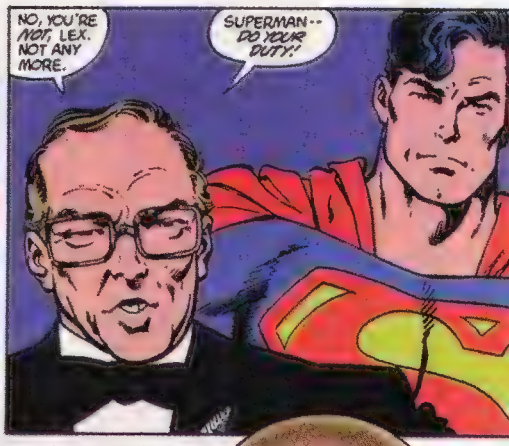
ANALYSIS: Massive Super-ego syndrome. Confront Luthor's ego with Superman's presence, and Luthor's problems intensify.

"Think about it," says Fischoff. "Superman comes to Metropolis and promptly shows him up. When he did that, Superman unknowingly inflicted upon Lex a narcissistic injury. Before Superman's arrival, Lex's whole identity was tied into being a dominating entrepreneur. Superman threw all that into doubt, made him vulnerable, and that really pisses Lex off."

Following Superman's arrival, most of the subject's activities have centered around massaging his own massive ego. Even seemingly healthy acts—getting married and raising a child—revolve around this goal.

"His relationship with his wife and daughter also serve narcissistic grounds, just in a different way," says Fischoff. "He wants to feel better about himself as a man, so he becomes a family man. Yet, he jeopardizes that family by continuing to pursue crime and his agenda of destroying Superman. The real test for Lex will be if, one day, the writers make him choose between his family and his ego."

Luthor's ego is so out of control that he even gave himself cancer once by wearing a Kryptonite ring on the odd chance he might be able to kill Superman with it. And it doesn't look like he's learned his lesson. "His dysfunction is so severe," says Fischoff, "that he would undoubtedly try it again. Rather than admit he was wrong, he would just do more scientific research to try and do it better next time. He would never admit he was wrong."



TREATMENT: Uncertain. Due to the nature of the subject's dysfunction, Fischoff is wary of sending him to therapy. "He would no doubt view therapy as a competition and try to outsmart every therapist he deals with."

California-based Michael Goldman would just love to see Galactus analyzed by a shrink. Just think o' the size of that couch!

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BEH

PHOTO BY CRAIG BLANKENHORN

TOP SECRET Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras (opposite) issued a gag order to all involved with the Spidey relaunch.

HID CLOSED DOORS

Shrouded in mystery, details of the SPIDER-MAN relaunch are comics' best-kept secret—and that's exactly how Marvel wants it

By The *Wizard* Staff

Shredded documents. Gag orders. Phony paperwork.

The next Tom Clancy novel? Nope. An excerpt from *The Starr Report*? Not even close. This covert action describes November's Spider-Man relaunch, and the cloak-and-dagger measures taken by Marvel are worthy of the CIA.

"There are a few fakes running around," admits writer Howard Mackie, the relaunch's front-man, who's been handed the task of plotting the Web-slinger's new start. "Plots, scripts, even artwork. Hey, if you want to be surprised and experience the comics as you read them, Spider-Man is the place to do it."

No kidding. Following the lead of the sworn-to-secrecy film industry where the dino of "Godzilla" went faceless until opening day, Marvel's Spidey relaunch has become an impressive exercise in stealth tactics.

Since the relaunch was announced several months ago, Marvel has intentionally kept mum on the topic. Solicitation synopses of relaunch issues are deliberately vague. Creators are tight-lipped; supposedly key creators must get permission from Spider-editor Ralph Macchio to talk to the press. Even the story *preceding* the relaunch (September's "Final Chapter") was kept a secret, with multiple endings and artwork prepared to throw readers—and even other *Marvel staffers*—off.

Here's what we do know: 1) *Amazing Spider-Man* and *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* will be the sole "current continuity" books, both restarting with #1 issues, 2) both will be written by Mackie, and 3) relaunch guru John Byrne will draw *Amazing* and Spider-veteran John Romita Jr. will draw *Peter Parker*. Aside from some carefully worded solicitation copy, *that's it*.

The gag order comes from the top, namely Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras. "I think having information is a great thing," Harras says. "But what I like more is getting to the last page of a comic and going, 'Holy gosh, I never saw that coming!'"

Harras' trigger-man Macchio stresses that for all the secrecy and deception, "I haven't lied to anyone. There's been no fibbing. Holding back information is the most I've done."

Without any Deep Throats or paid informants, *Wizard* exhausted every possible avenue to untangle the Spider-Man mystery once and for all.

That is, if we live to tell about it.

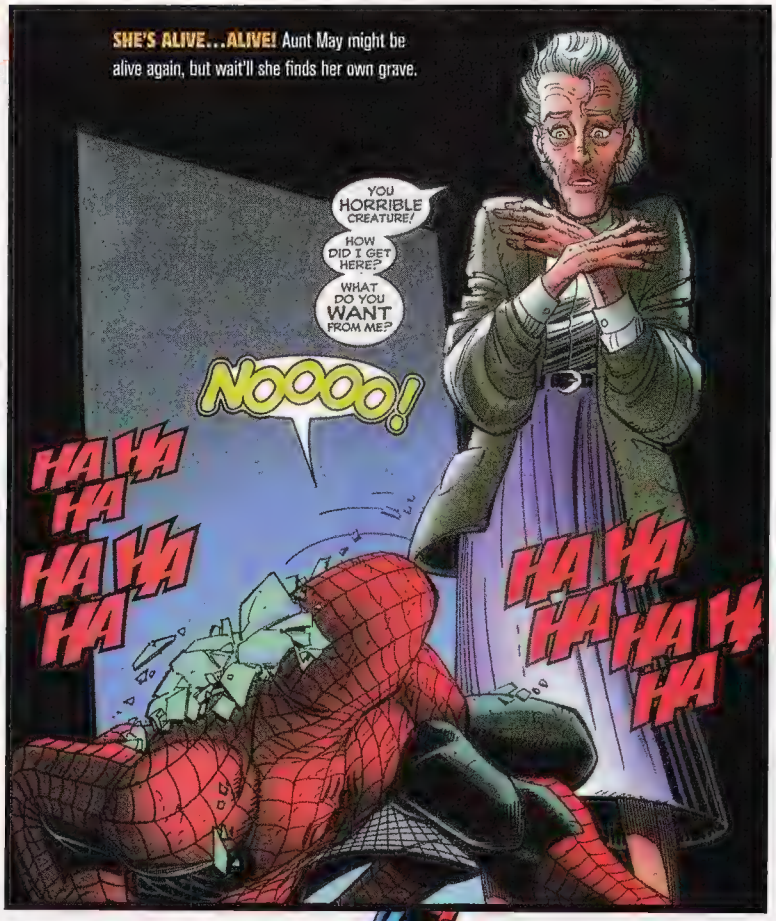
What's the deal with this "new" Spider-Man?

WHAT WE'VE HEARD: With Peter Parker focusing on his role as a family man, he gives up being Spider-Man, sacrificing one responsibility for a greater one.

WHAT WE KNOW: Marvel's solicitation copy for *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 reveals a new Spider-Man appearing on the scene "while Peter watches from the sidelines!" Who could this new Spidey be? "It is somebody we've seen before," says writer Howard Mackie, "but I can guarantee readers will have no idea who it is. Even Peter has no idea." (One thing we can hopefully rule out: "No clones," according to the cover of Marvel's solicitation copy.)

As to whether Peter will pick up the mantle again, Mackie laughs at the notion, "Well...yes, c'mon. That'd be like asking DC if Superman was ever coming back from the dead. Of course he is." He also adds to worried fans, "This is only a story arc. It has a definite beginning, middle and end, and we're not going to stretch it out."

ODDS ARE... This "new" Spidey's career will be short-lived. Pete will undoubtedly be Spider-Man. This "new" Spidey will force Pete out of retirement—most likely when Peter must save his life as the real McCoy. As for who the new guy is, we're betting it's either Hobie Brown (a.k.a. The Prowler) or a grown-up Ollie Osnick (a.k.a. the "Spectacular Spider-Kid"), both having a science background to enable them to somehow mimic Spidey's abilities.



SHE'S ALIVE...ALIVE! Aunt May might be alive again, but wait'll she finds her own grave.

Where's Mary Jane in all this?

WHAT WE'VE HEARD: She and Peter are separating. She's moving to California to pursue her modeling career.

WHAT WE KNOW: "They're not divorced," says Mackie. "She's in and out of the city doing modeling and traveling a lot. She's not dead. She's not a Skrull. She's around."

But not around enough, apparently, to keep Peter's eye from wandering. "Everybody agrees that having Peter and Mary Jane married is less interesting, because any romantic tension has been missing," says the writer. "I think increased romantic tension is not a bad thing and just because they are married [at the start of the relaunch] doesn't necessarily mean it will be the permanent status quo."

ODDS ARE... Mary Jane ain't going anywhere...for now. Just because they're still married doesn't mean they'll *always* be that way. The only way Mackie can increase romantic tension for Peter? It's with a new love interest.

What will Aunt May's role be?

WHAT WE'VE HEARD: Nothing really. We're still kinda shocked she's been alive the whole time, kidnapped by Spider-nemesis Norman Osborn shortly before an impostor of her (hired by Osborn) died in *Amazing Spider-Man* #400.

WHAT WE KNOW: "Her role will be as a regular supporting character, similar to what it was before," says Mackie. "Aunt May is the daily reminder of Peter's original failure to stop his Uncle Ben from dying."

We kinda wonder what her reaction'll be when she finds out she already has a tombstone above her grave. "Well, that's gonna be tricky," chuckles Mackie, pondering the situation. "We're going to play with that."

ODDS ARE... Aunt May's back as the fragile support in Peter's life, hard as it seems to believe. We're certain her ailing health will create plenty of anxiety for everyone's friendly neighborhood Wall-crawler. Just like old times.

Is Gwen Stacy coming back?

WHAT WE'VE HEARD: She's coming back after being dead for 25 years. (She was killed by the Green Goblin waaay back in 1973's *Amazing Spider-Man* #121.) And this time she *won't*

be a clone, like in previous Spider-tales.

WHAT WE KNOW: "Is that actually going around?" Mackie laughs. "She's not coming back. That one I'll give you."

ODDS ARE... Gwen stays dead. If anything, Mackie has been setting up Gwen's cousin Jill as a potential love interest for Peter over the past year in *Peter Parker*. Jill reminds Peter of Gwen quite a bit, and that's all the presence Peter's deceased ex will likely have.

What of the Spider-baby?

WHAT WE'VE HEARD: Peter and Mary Jane's presumed dead daughter could really be alive. She was stolen at the hospital by an agent of Norman Osborn and held in captivity.

WHAT WE KNOW: The "nurse" tending to Mary Jane when giving birth in *Amazing Spider-Man* #418 was an agent of the scheming Osborn. Immediately after Mary Jane had the supposed stillborn child, this agent was seen wheeling a cart which could have held a baby inside it. She met with Osborn and accepted payment for her task at the hospital. The task was never revealed.

When Peter believed their stillborn daughter was alive in *Amazing Spider-Man* #441, Mary Jane told him their baby was dead and that she felt it die. That's where it's been left.

ODDS ARE... The Spider-Baby stays outta the picture (read: dead). The Spider-office has taken great pains to "de-age" Peter and Mary Jane appropriately to their early 20s. To make Peter a working father would only serve to negate that.

What of Norman Osborn?

WHAT WE'VE HEARD: Osborn, Spidey's nemesis and the main villain over the past year, will likely exit the series.

WHAT WE KNOW: He ain't dead. Instead, Osborn's a disfigured raving lunatic as a result of his "gift" from August's "Gathering of Five" storyline. And he's on the loose, waiting to prey on Peter Parker. "Norman will not be a focus of the stories for a while," says Mackie. "It frightens me how much I love that character. I'm going to miss him for the time that he's gone."

ODDS ARE... Osborn will return in full Green Goblin regalia, likely after the relaunch's first 12 months. We're also betting that his mysterious disfigurement will reveal a truly goblin-esque face to better reflect his alter-ego.

Is Peter Parker getting a new job?

WHAT WE'VE HEARD: He'll be making ends meet as a freelance photographer for the *Daily Bugle* as well as a new job working as a research scientist.

WHAT WE KNOW: As the relaunch begins, Peter will have a new job at a research facility, tapping into his bio-chemistry background. "I've always had a problem with the fact that Peter's best inventions—web fluid and web-shooters—were at age 16 and he's done nothing since," Mackie says. "We'll try to let him focus on some new stuff at this new job."

Peter will continue doing freelance work for the *Bugle*, according to the writer ("because he likes doing it"), and working on his graduate studies at Empire State University.

"He's going to be stretching himself thin," Mackie says.

ODDS ARE... Pete's gonna be a busy guy. Hopefully, the new job will give him the freedom to become Spider-Man when trouble brews. But with a new job, another question pops up...

IN OR OUT? Jill Stacy (top) is a possible love interest for Peter, while his marriage to MJ (right) could become strained. Above: Will the Goblin return? Yes, but not immediately.

Who'll be in Peter's supporting cast?

WHAT WE'VE HEARD: Besides Aunt May coming back and Mary Jane exiting, we've heard that Pete's supporting cast will basically stay the same in *Peter Parker* with all-new cast members in *Amazing*.

WHAT WE KNOW: "I have a love of the original Spider-Man cast, like Betty Brant, and I want to bring them back," says Mackie. "I also want to introduce new members."

Peter Parker's cast will be the familiar staffers at the *Daily Bugle*,

The Real Deal?

Is Spider-Man's secretive relaunch leaving fans turned on...or turned off?

Things are finally be looking up for Spider-Man.

For all the hero's problems inside the stories and, at times, outside of them, it seems everything is falling into place for the Web-slinger. With *Amazing Spider-Man* and *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* restarting in November, it promises three things: Big name creators. Big relaunch. Big top-secret stories.

The first two sound great. But the last bit leaves one big question mark since readers truly haven't a clue what the stories are going to be about. Industry insiders wonder if keeping things a secret will build reader buzz or, conversely, lose it.

It's risky, admits Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras, but the gamble is experimental. "This is a risk business," he says. "Right now we're exploring the bounds of what we should and shouldn't give away. It's a learning process, and soon we'll find out where that boundary is."

Many retailers seem to like the element of surprise taken by Marvel's marketing. "Our customers are champing at the bit to see what's going to happen," says Mike Banks, manager of Phoenix's All About Books and Comics chain of stores. "Our orders will definitely increase."

"Now Marvel has to back it up," adds John Robinson, manager of the Illinois chain of Graham Crackers stores. "They're telling me, 'It's gonna be great,' but I don't know for sure, because they're not telling me."

Marvel knows it all too well, says Spider-Man editor Ralph Macchio. "We're creating such a sense of anticipation that we now *have* to deliver. But I'm willing to take the chance, for the readers' sake."

Those readers, as evidenced through online bulletin boards, have mixed feelings about the reboot. "I haven't been this jazzed for Spider-Man since Todd McFarlane drew him," says one online fan. Another says, "I'm nervous. It's just going to be another 'Clone Saga.'"

"When I heard about the reboot, I was sad that *Amazing Spider-Man* was ending [and restarting with a #1 issue]," says one fan, summing up the widespread sentiment. "But I am genuinely curious to see what [Spidey relaunch creators] Howard Mackie, John Byrne and John Romita Jr. have in store for the Web-slinger."

The bottom line for Harras is that the final product will win fans over, regardless of any buzz or lack thereof. "Romita, Byrne and Mackie are really in synch and it just feels more 'Spider-Man-y' than it has in a while. I don't know if this is the best Spider-Man I've ever seen, but it's definitely the best I've seen in several years." ■ **The *Wizard* Staff**

with *Bugle* publisher J. Jonah Jameson at the forefront. "Jameson, by far and away, is my favorite supporting character. I'd like to see him restored to being an overblown and overly theatrical zealot who is very focused on his hatred of Spider-Man."

Though the staffers might be familiar, the *Bugle* itself will undergo a redesign since its demise in *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #98. "For all the iconic Marvel buildings out there, the *Daily Bugle* building has always been a non-descript spaghetti box with a sign at the top," says Mackie. "If you look at DC's *Daily Planet* building, you know what it is as soon as you look at it. We need something like that."

Amazing's supporting cast will indeed focus on new characters at Pete's research lab job. But the writer prefers to remain mum on who they are. "I'd rather wait to reveal them as they pop up in the books."

ODDS ARE... You'll see old favorites, as well as those that might become new ones. Like the rest of this relaunch, we'll just have to wait and see.

What villains will Spidey face?

WHAT WE'VE HEARD: To go along with a fresh start, Spidey will face a lotta new villains.

WHAT WE KNOW: For the first year of the relaunch, Spider-Man will be seeing more new villains instead of the classics. "You are not going to be seeing Dr. Octopus, Electro, Sandman or most of Spider-Man's original rogues gallery in the first year of *Amazing* or *Peter Parker*," says Mackie. "Since those characters are appearing in *Spider-Man: Chapter 1* [which retells Spidey's earlier tales], I don't want to have that redundancy."

Only four definite villains are known at this time. A revamped Scorpion appears in *Amazing* #1 and a new guy called Ranger attempts to assassinate a U.S. senator in *Peter Parker* #1 ("Whether he's a villain or not remains to be seen," says Mackie). In *Amazing* #2, a "very, very powerful character" called Shadraq appears. In *Peter Parker* #2, which picks up from events in *Thor* #8, a dark god called Tocketts throws the two heroes around.

NO CLONE Mackie guarantees readers won't guess the new Spidey's identity. (Hint: it ain't Peter Parker!)

Looking towards the future, Mackie makes no secret of the one villain on his wish list: "I would love to bring Venom back as the anti-Spider-Man within the first year. If I have my way, we *will* be seeing Venom soon."

Mackie adds that the look of each title will determine what villains will appearing. "*Amazing* is going to lend itself to more over-the-top Spider-Man villains wearing big, flashy costumes," says Mackie, who believes the approach compliments Byrne's artwork.

To mesh with the art style of Romita Jr., *Peter Parker* will have more street-level villains like Kingpin and Hammerhead (who apparently didn't perish in *Peter Parker* 95). "There won't be so many guns and mobsters," says Mackie, "but rather in terms of Kingpin using [super-assassins] in the vein of Bullseye and Elektra."

ODDS ARE... Except for the souped-up Scorpion, you won't be seeing the classic rogues gallery until next fall. Much like the new supporting cast, let's hope that the new foes Spidey will be additions that can stand the test of time.

The Wizard *Staff has a secret, too. But if we told you, we'd have to knee-cap you.*

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CASTING CALL

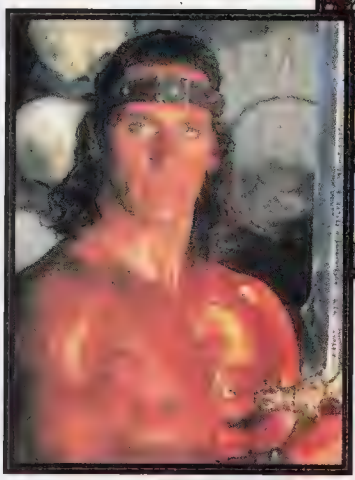
WIZARD casts the THOR MOVIE!

It's time to drop the hammer on Hollywood.

The world's most massive Thunder God, Thor, is screaming for his own movie. And when an immortal with the strength to lift an oil tanker opens his mighty mouth, we're certainly gonna listen.

Did you hear that Hollywood? "Thor: The Coming of Ragnarok" is a god-like idea, one that'd take the Asgardian hero from Earth to the heavens, down to the depths of Hell and back again. When the forces of evil combine to usher in the end of the world (Ragnarok), they find Thor and his Asgardian comrades standing against him. Yep, we're talkin' Royal Rumble here, folks!

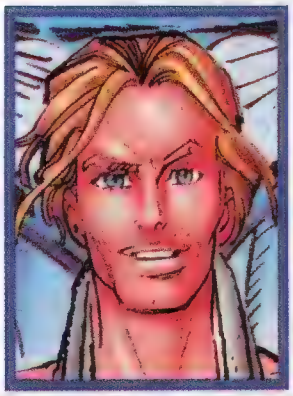
The gods smile upon this one; a Thor movie would definitely be manna from heaven. Forget the popcorn, though—for such an action-packed thrillfest, we're gonna need a flagon of mead and a turkey drumstick the size of a Buick.



RALF MOELLER as THOR

Bigger is better, says Ralf Moeller ("Conan Adventures"), and we're not stupid enough to disagree with him. Verily, Moeller is a spot-on match for the Thunder God both in facial appearance and musculature.

BY A BUNCH OF WIZARD STAFFERS



ED BURNS as JAKE OLSON

Forget rope, third-degree or Indian—the Burns we want to play Thor's paramedic alter-ego is named Ed. Starring in "Saving Private Ryan," Ed Burns proved he's got charisma in small buckets, as well as that much-needed sensitive side.

SELA WARD as DR. JANE FOSTER

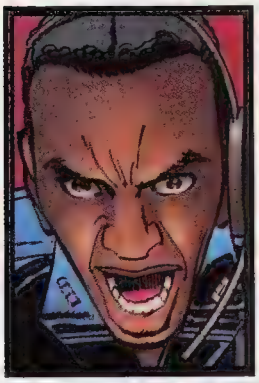
Is there a doctor in the house? Beautiful Sela Ward ("The Fugitive") has enough charm and grace to breathe life into Thor's former gal pal Dr. Jane Foster.

DAN HAGGERTY as ODIN

If you think there's a better man to play Odin, the father of the Asgardian gods, than disheveled, crazy-looking Dan Haggerty ("The Life and Times of Grizzly Adams"), you're a few sandwiches short of a picnic.

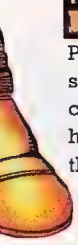
JANINE TUNER as HANNAH FAIRMONT

If Jake Olson's fiancé Hannah Fairmont ever needs a kidney, we'll ask her physical and spiritual alter-ego Janine Turner ("Northern Exposure") to cough it up.



TOMMY DAVIDSON as DEMITRIUS COLLINS

Paramedic Demitrius Collins might have something sinister up his sleeve. The only thing rubber-faced comedian Tommy Davidson ("Booty Call") has up his sleeve is acting talent. We'd say that's more than enough.



GEORGE BUZA as VOLSTAGG

The voluminous Volstagg is a prime candidate for a diet. Luckily for him the mirthful George Buza ("The Adventures of Sinbad") needs a lot of padding to round off the "Warriors Three."

CARY ELWES as FANDRAL

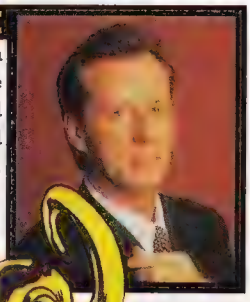
Cary Elwes ("The Princess Bride," "Liar, Liar") has the skill, the swordsmanship and the urbanity to pull off a performance as Fandral from the "Warriors Three."

SCOTT GLENN as HOGUN THE GRIM

Stoic warrior Hogun the Grim, a member of the "Warriors Three," wouldn't smile unless he learned that the suave and austere actor Scott Glenn ("Absolute Power") was playing him.

JAMES WOODS as LOKI

He's bad to the bone. His sneer is framed on Hell's fiery walls. He's played some characters that make Loki look like a Girl Scout. James Woods ("Contact") doth stand as a casting coup for Thor's evil half-brother.



HUDSON LEICK as THE ENCHANTRESS

We took one look at "Xena" star Hudson Leick—and are still looking. Audiences will be under her spell when she dons the skin-tight duds of the evil sorceress Enchantress.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY FOTO FANTASIES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED: ED BURNS; JEFF SUROWIEC/OUTLINE; DAN HAGGERTY; PAUL HARRIS/OUTLINE; JAMES WOODS: AL BERT

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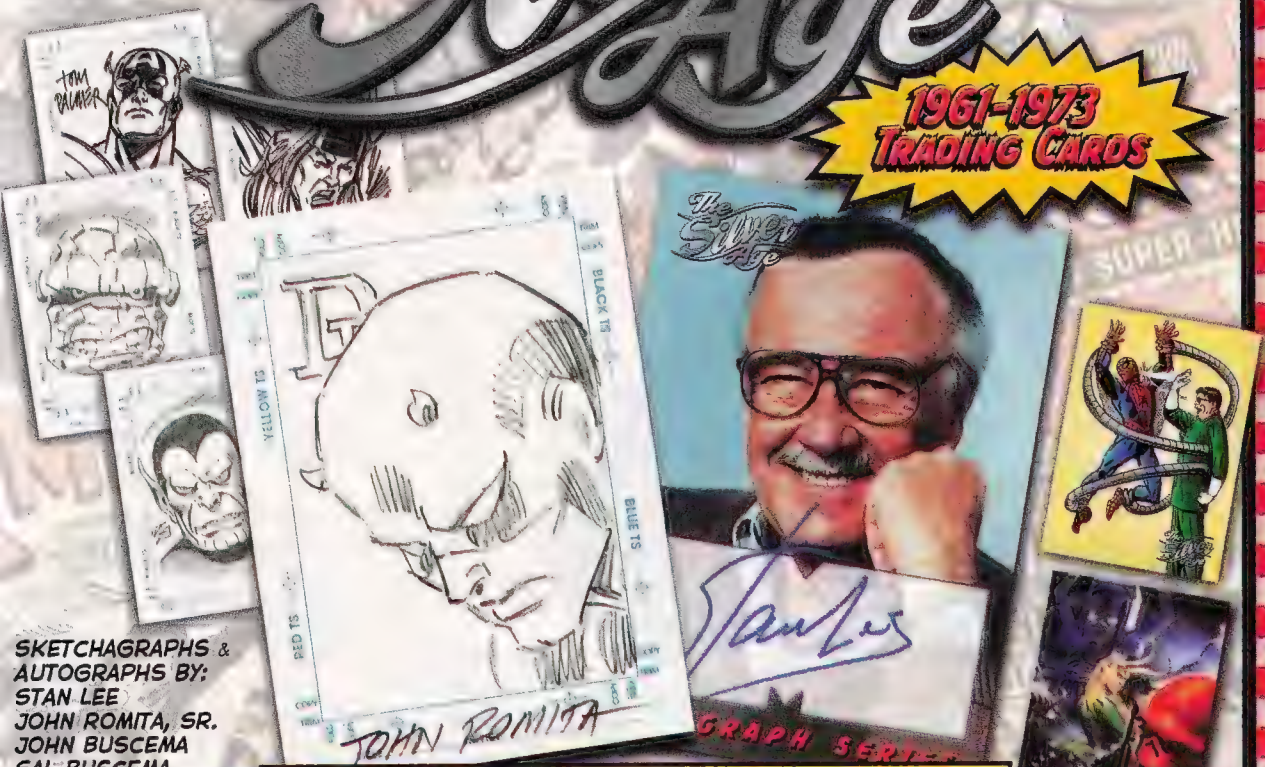

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ROLL THE BONES

Nickelodeon gambles on animated 'Bone' film

If Jeff Smith has his way, there'll be no singing in Boneville. Smith, creator of the black-and-white comic *Bone*, has inked a deal to co-write, co-produce and direct an animated "Bone" movie for Nickelodeon Films. Just don't expect your typical Disney musical.

"I am so pleased with the people at Nickelodeon," Smith said. "They really get it. Nickelodeon just wants to make a really good 'Bone' movie. It's very clear that we're both on the same track."

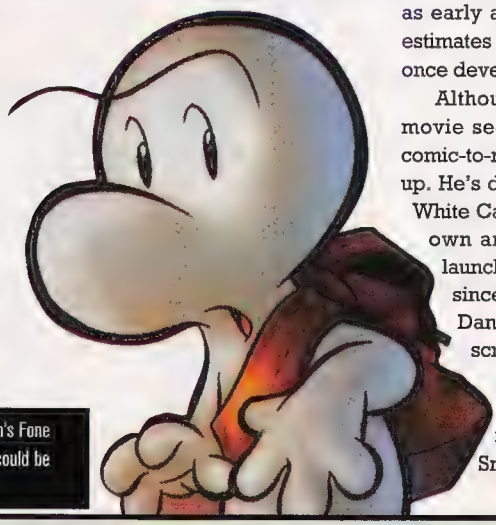
And that track could get the animated film into theaters as early as 2000. Using traditional cel animation, Smith estimates it'll take some 18 months to complete the project once development begins.

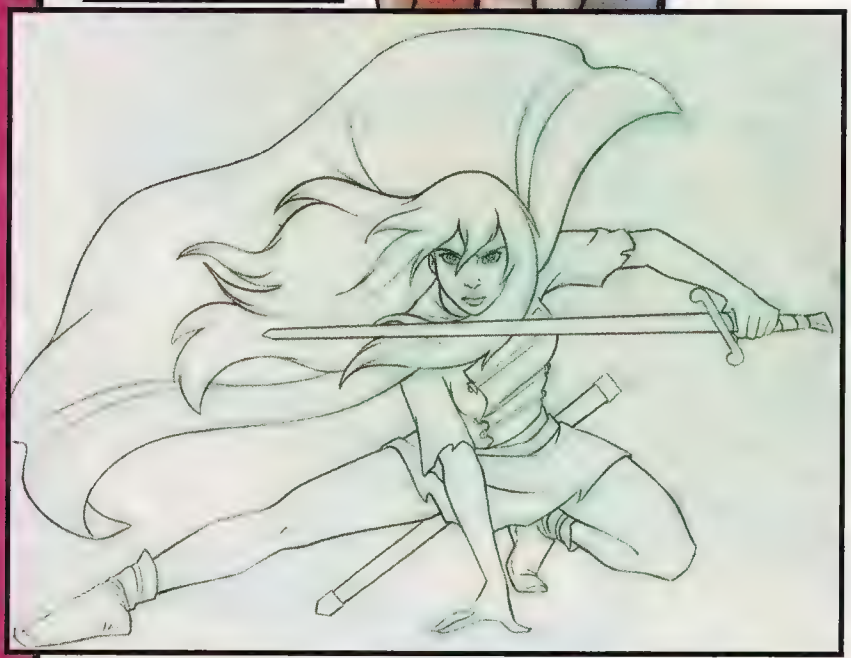
Although Smith's major involvement in the "Bone" movie seems to be the exception to the rule for most comic-to-movie adaptations, he has the résumé to back it up. He's directed animated commercials for such firms as White Castle and Warner Animation, and established his own animation house, Character Builders, before launching *Bone* publisher Cartoon Books in 1991. He's since sold Character Builders to his former partner Dan Root, who's also collaborating on the "Bone" screenplay.

Bone, originally created as a sweeping trilogy, tells the tale of three Bone cousins—the friendly, heroic Fone Bone, the slightly stupid Smiley Bone, and the devious Phoney Bone—who are run out of their hometown of Boneville and lost in a fantasy-based forest. The cousins soon are reunited, and besides meeting up with a number of human creatures such as the smart and beautiful Thorn, they face all manner of rat creatures, dragons and talking bugs.

Smith hopes to keep the movie's storyline similar to that of the comic. And with more than 30 issues of the series already behind him, there's plenty to choose from where plot's concerned. "The main storyline for the movie is the Great Cow Race," Smith revealed, in reference to the hysterical event chronicled in *Bone* #10. "Essentially, the film's storyline comes from the first three trade paperbacks, about 16 issues. But the movie will have a definite ending."

Smith had already commissioned development art for the film proposal from Neil Ross, the artist





BONE HEAD Jeff Smith's Fone Bone (right) and Thorn could be animated by 2000.

who provided conceptual illustrations for "Space Jam" and "Braveheart." Presently, Smith is selecting his creative team and working on finishing the second draft of the screenplay, due in November.

But for now, Smith's just happy that his baby is in good hands. "Nickelodeon understands not just 'Bone' but the same things I think animated movies should be," he explained. "They don't want to make another Disney movie. 'Bone' is as unique as 'Star Wars' or 'Lord of the Rings,' and the people at Nick understand that Han Solo doesn't break out into song!" ■ **PATRICK SAURIOL**

CREATURE FEATURE Don't expect a totally cutesy flick.

CURSE OF 'THE CROW'

Explosion kills stuntman on the set of new television series

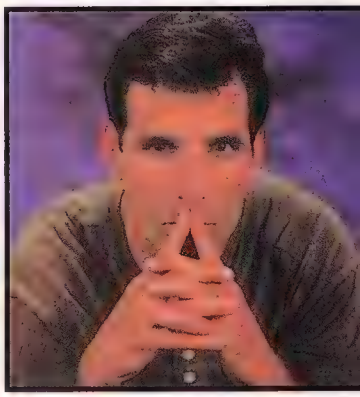
While observing the detonation of a boat for the sixth episode of the new TV series "The Crow: Stairway to Heaven," stuntman Marc Akerstream, 44, was killed when pieces of the exploding craft struck him in the head on August 14. The tragedy has renewed talk of a "curse of 'The Crow.'" In 1994, actor Brandon Lee was accidentally shot and killed on the set of the original "Crow" movie, and in 1996 a stunt coordinator broke his back while working on the sequel, "The Crow: City of Angels."

The recent explosion was set up according to existing safety requirements, right down to establishing an off-limits distance between the crew and the boat. The incident is being considered a freak accident and it's unlikely charges will be filed. Akerstream, a 15-year veteran of stunt work, was standing by other crew members also watching the explosion, including actor Mark Dacascos, who has taken over the role of Eric Draven that Brandon Lee originated in the first "Crow" film. No one else was injured. ■ **PS**

MTV: McFARLANE TELEVISION

Spawn creator rocks with new Pearl Jam video

Todd McFarlane wants his MTV. And now he's got it. The 37-year-old Spawn creator has already conquered the comics and toy markets, as well as putting out a "Spawn" live-action film and animated series for HBO. Now, he's set his sights on the music biz.



"Pearl Jam wanted to make a new video, their first in six years," he said. "But they didn't want to star in it, so the problem for them was, 'how do you pull that off?' Well one day Eddie [Vedder, Pearl Jam's lead singer] came home late, turned on 'Spawn' on HBO and went, 'Aha! Give me the guy who does that!' Things just kind of evolved on their own from there."

Evolved indeed. The newly animated track is titled "Do The Evolution" from Pearl Jam's latest album, *Yield*. Dealing with major historical events, the video brings many of humanity's darker times to animated life. "Most of it was done on the phone between me and Eddie. We had lengthy conversations about the meaning of life," McFarlane said with a laugh about the evolution of the video's artwork. "That may sound funny, but the song talks about the beginning, middle and end of life on Earth in three minutes, 55 seconds, so our conversations definitely factored into the video."

Co-directing the piece with Kevin Altieri, director of the "Gen13" animated film, McFarlane delivered the final project in a mere 10 weeks. Despite the outrageous time pressures, McFarlane's proud of the final result. "Eddie came down to L.A. and sat there as we were editing it," he said. "He knows a lot about editing, so it was a good time. It was nice to have everyone's voice on it."

As for the future, McFarlane isn't closing the door on the music scene. "Yeah, we're going to wind up doing more stuff," he admitted. Besides illustrating the cover to Korn's latest album, *Follow the Leader*, he'll design an upcoming Ozzie Osbourne album. ■ **SCOTT BRICK**

DEF TODDY JAM McFarlane (above) lends his animation vision to the newest Pearl Jam song, "Do the Evolution."

CUTTING EDGE

'Blade' slices up competition, prepares for sequels

Marvel finally did it.

After years of failed projects and straight-to-video releases, the comic book company has finally put out a successful motion picture. And its name is "Blade." ("Men in Black" doesn't count, since Marvel acquired the property already in progress.)

Drawing good reviews and earning more than $50 million in its first few weeks of release, New Line Cinema's "Blade" has already sparked talks of sequels to the Wesley Snipes-starring film. "Right now, the sequel exists as a possibility," said screenwriter David Goyer. "I've talked to both Marvel and New Line and they're both definitely interested. It's likely at this point there will be a sequel."

And that fits right in with Goyer's original plans. "When I first pitched for 'Blade,' I envisioned it as a trilogy," he said. "In a way, it has to do with vampirism as a virus, as a metaphor for AIDS. When [actress] N'bushe Wright has that scene talking about how vampirism is like a sexually transmitted disease, that touches on what I envisioned the trilogy to be. The second and third movies continue with that exploration."

While Goyer won't reveal too much about the proposed "Blade" sequels, he will drop a few hints. He definitely has a new villain in mind, namely Marvel's living vampire Morbius. Or at least something close to him. "We postulated in the first movie that vampirism is a sort of progressive virus," he said, "so for the sequel, the direction we're kind of heading in is: What happens if that virus mutates? What happens if that new strain creates something even meaner? Blade may be forced into a position where he'd have to team up with the vampire community to fight against this new menace."

As for the third "Blade" storyline, Goyer wishes to keep it as much a secret as possible, but he did reveal a tantalizing view of the future. "If there is a third movie it would deal with the apocalyptic meltdown [the Blood Rain] that main villain Deacon Frost was talking about at the end of the first film—kind of like a 'Planet of the Vampires' concept."

For us humans, that'd really suck. ■ PS

BLADE RUNNER Wesely Snipes could return in two more films as Blade.

RETURN OF THE KING

Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings' slated for big screen in 2000

Get ready to ring in the new millennium.

J.R.R. Tolkien's epic book trilogy "Lord of the Rings" is set to become a trilogy of live-action, state-of-the-art movies for Miramax Films. Director Peter Jackson ("The Frighteners") will shoot all three films consecutively, with the first, "The Fellowship of the Ring," scheduled for release by Christmas 2000. Each additional film in the trilogy ("The Two Towers" and "The Return of the King," respectively) will then follow six months after the previous one. The film rights to Tolkien's trilogy prequel, *The Hobbit*, were also acquired.

Considered the granddaddy of all fantasy literature, Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" was originally published in 1954-55. It chronicles the treacherous adventures of various creatures—including hobbits, humans, elves and orcs—as they battle and scheme for possession of five all-powerful magical rings in the land of Middle-earth.

Jackson is currently scoping his native country of New Zealand for Middle-earth locales, and will use his special effects company, WETA Digital, to realize the many fantastic creatures of Tolkien's world. Normal-sized actors will be morphed to look like the smaller-sized hobbits, and digital armies of 200,000 independently moving soldiers will be created for mammoth battle sequences.

"It has taken 45 years for filmmaking technology to finally catch up with Tolkien's imagination," Jackson revealed in a press release announcing the project. "We are fortunate down here in New Zealand to have both the computer technology and the natural landscapes to bring the unique world of Middle-earth to life. It's very exciting to be making the 'Lord of the Rings' as a trilogy." ■ PS

RINGSIDE The animated Gandalf and company get real flesh and blood.

TRAILERS...

LIGHTS, CAMERA... ACTION?

'X-MEN' STILL A GO: Rumors ran rampant that the live-action "X-Men" movie was canned when the art department was let go in September. It turns out that production simply was temporarily halted so screenwriter Chris McQuarrie ("The Usual Suspects") could have until October to turn in his rewrite. As for recent rumors, Sarah Michelle Gellar ("Buffy, the Vampire Slayer") might very well be the front-runner for the role of everyone's favorite Southern belle, Rogue.

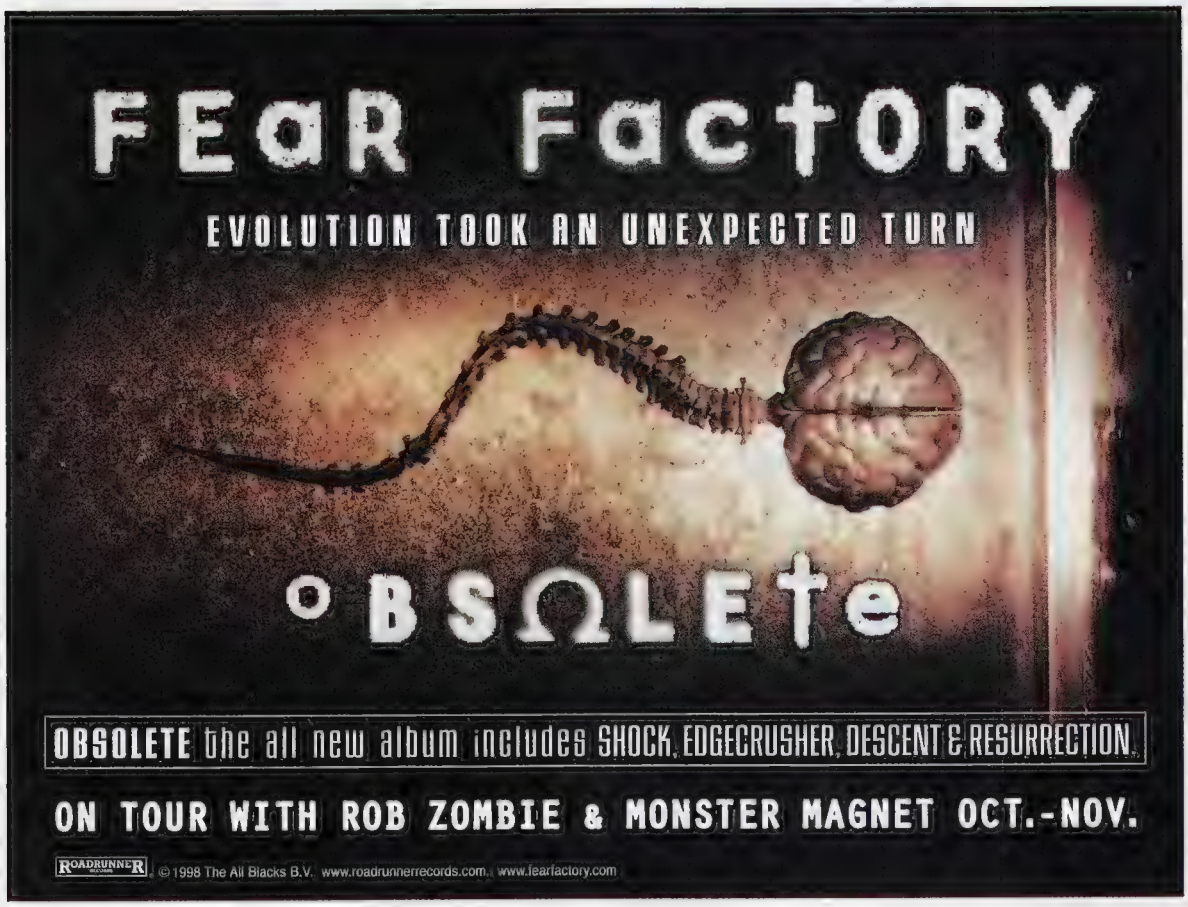
BLADE: LAWYER HUNTER: Despite the success of New Line Cinema's "Blade" film (see related item), a startling new development has occurred. Marv Wolfman, creator of the Blade and Deacon Frost characters, is suing New Line Cinema (the studio that made "Blade"), TVT Records (the soundtrack), Toy Biz (the action figures) and Time Warner (New Line's parent company) claiming trademark and copyright infringement. Wolfman claims the two characters he created for Marvel's *Tomb of Dracula* series in the 1970s were used without consulting him first, and that he owns the rights to the characters. "Marv was a freelance writer when he created Blade and Deacon Frost and not under contract to Marvel at the time," said Adrien Askarieh, the lawyer representing Wolfman. Marvel is not presently named in the lawsuit because it is protected under the Delaware courts due to its own bankruptcy.

SPIDER-MAN'S WEB UNTANGLING: While presiding over the Marvel/Toy Biz merger, U.S. District Court judge Roderick McKelvie said that untangling the mess over the "Spider-Man" movie rights is of paramount importance to his own case. The California courts are trying to determine who legally owns the rights, with such big names as MGM, Sony and Viacom all claiming an interest. Meanwhile, Oscar-winning "Titanic" director James Cameron is left waiting to see if he'll ever get to direct a big-screen Spidey film. With no end in sight, McKelvie threatened to resolve the California court battle himself if the pace doesn't pick up.

'DOGMA' DAYS OF FALL: It's looking more and more likely that audiences won't see Kevin Smith's latest flick for a while. According to the "Chasing Amy" director (and current *Daredevil* writer), Miramax feels his latest film should be entered for judgment in next year's Cannes Film Festival in May of '99. That would also mean North American audiences couldn't see the film until *after* Cannes–possibly around October 1999!

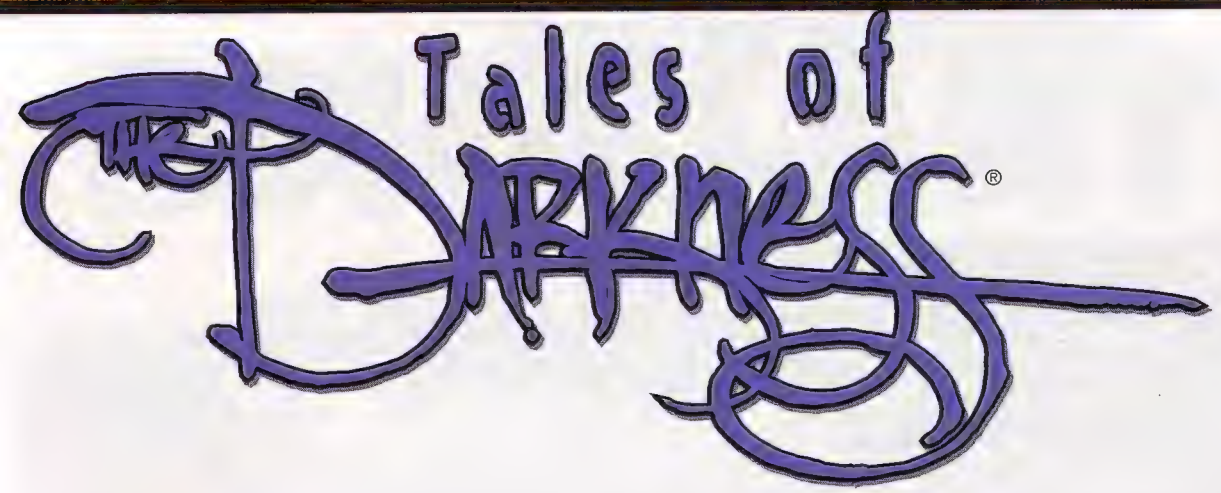
SHORT TAKES: Dude, that's heinous! The "South Park" movie script is on red paper to prevent unauthorized photocopying....Rob Liefeld plans to write and direct the film adaptation of his latest comic *Re:Gex*....Randy Queen's *Darkchylde* is being considered by Hollywood as a basis for a live-action film....The rights to Garth Ennis' *Pride and Joy* Vertigo mini-series have been acquired by Warner Bros....Jim Carrey as the Grinch? That could happen if director Ron Howard's "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas" takes off...Chris Carter has hinted he might begin work on the next "X-Files" feature as soon as next summer. ■ PS

McFARLANE PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRAUB; "BLADE" PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW LINE CINEMA; "LORD OF THE RINGS" AND GELLAR PHOTOS COURTESY THE EVERETT COLLECTION; SMITH PHOTO © 1998 CRAIG BLANCHORN.



THE DARKNESS BECOMES HIM!

WIZARD #1/2 OFFER



Somewhere, sometime in the distant future, a cruel and ruthless young man is about to be crowned regent of a fragmented kingdom. But the hourglass turns and the sands of time are running out for crown prince Christian of the House of Estacado, a future ancestor of Jackie Estacado. A brave and very beautiful woman sets out to bring down the dark and bloody prince before his reign of terror becomes cemented with his coronation. Now, facing off against the most powerful man on the planet, she has discovered a weakness she can exploit. She sets out to seduce him and have his child, knowing that the monstrous prince will expire at the moment of conception.

Will her plan work? Will her beauty be enough to take down the dark prince? There's only one way to find out: Fill out the order form, enclose three measly bucks and mail it all in. You can't afford not to!

Within the Tales of the Darkness #1/2, you'll find these hidden treasures:

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- A brand-new cover drawn by artist extraordinaire Joe Benitez!
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- And the most-magical morsel of all—this is a *Tales of the Darkness* story you won't find anywhere else! It's only available in this #1/2 offer!

Hurry! It's up to you to help stop the reign of terror. Get that order in now!

DARK LAW

No reproductions of this coupon will be accepted. This coupon must be sent in the accompanying envelope. With this coupon, you can order two comics. You may put additional coupons in the same envelope. Remit by check or money order only. Canadian orders remit $4.00 per copy, other foreign orders remit $6.00 per copy. All payment must be in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. Make all checks payable to Wizard Entertainment. Offer good only while supply lasts. Please allow eight-to-12 weeks from date of expiration for delivery. Changes of address will not be forwarded unless Wizard Entertainment is notified in writing by January 22, 1999.

THIS OFFER EXPIRES JANUARY 22, 1999

BASIC TRAINING

JIM CALAFIORE SHOWS YOU

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR

HOW TO WORK WITH SHADOWS

PHOTO: SUE A. GOLDMAN

Comics are black and white.

No, I'm not just talking about independents published without the benefit of the four-color process. *All* comics are black and white. That's where they begin and, in a sense, end. Colorists complete and enhance the artwork, not finish it. If a page can't stand on its own in black and white, then the penciler and inker haven't done their jobs. That's what makes working with shadows so critical.

The interplay of black areas with each other and how they compose against the white can convey setting, action, mood and, hopefully, clarity. With that said, I'm here to show you how best to work with shadows. So hit the lights and grab a pencil...

BACK IN BLACK

Let's start with an extreme. Here we have Thor in a series of panels surrounded by black or engulfed in shadow. I've handled the interaction three different ways. Now, not one of these is the "right" way. Use whatever fits the situation and your style.

Figure A leaves a halo of white completely around the hero. It clearly separates Thor from the black and doesn't let it interfere with the strength of his outline.

In figure B, I've let the black in a little more, filling it up to his outline. But to preserve his form, I've put a white halo on the interior of his outline. While he's now more connected to the shadow, he's still distinct from it.

The last option, figure C, allows the normal shading of the figure to run into the black around him. Now he's deeper in that shadow, almost swimming in it.

A

B

C

BLACK HOLES

Don't worry that allowing blacks to run together will hurt clarity. Sure, our eyes tell our brain that they can't see Green Lantern's arms and legs. (Don't worry Hal fans, they're still there.) But we've seen the human form before, so our brain compensates with that data when translating the information. In other words, it completes the "lines" for us and we can almost see the rest of Hal.

SHADOW PLAY

The use of shadows can also further storytelling and convey mood.

In figure A below, we have Commissioner Gordon obviously in a room somewhere—we see the wall behind him and part of a door but little else in the way of information.

In figure B, I pick a light source—a window off-panel—and cast the rest of the room in black shadow. Instant mood. Note how there's no halo separating Gordon from the shadow. It pulls him into the panel, connecting him directly with the mood of the room.

Lastly (figure C), without changing the shot at all, I've added a single element to the shadow and placed him in a very specific setting.

A quick note: When deciding whether or not to use heavy shadow and extensive blacks, keep your character in mind. For instance, unless the specific story called for it, I wouldn't use much black with Superman. In fact, given the chance, I would use no shadow at all with him, relying more on the white space and detail to fill his world. He's a positive character who lives in a world of hope.

On the other hand...

A

B

THE REALLY DARK KNIGHT

Batman *is* shadow. There's much interplay of blacks just within the figure itself. When drawing characters such as this, I like to let the shadowed/black areas run together, just skirting confusion of the image. I also try to keep as much black surrounding his chest emblem as I can, so it pops out like a beacon.

I've left the underside of his cape mostly open here for the purpose of demonstration. This probably isn't the best way to handle it, relying maybe too much on color to complete it. With the examples shown at left, I've filled the underside of the cape in complete black.

In figure A, I didn't change the shading on the arm. While it's still legible, it doesn't quite work. It's too connected to the cape and is almost sucked back into it.

In B, I've added a few highlight areas to the arm. These halos allow the arm to pop and come forward more. Also helping this effect is the drop shadow from the cape onto the arms. Shadows cast from objects can increase a drawing's three-dimensional effect. The heavy shadow across the forearm makes it feel like the arm is emerging from deeper recesses of the cape.

SHADOW OF THE BAT

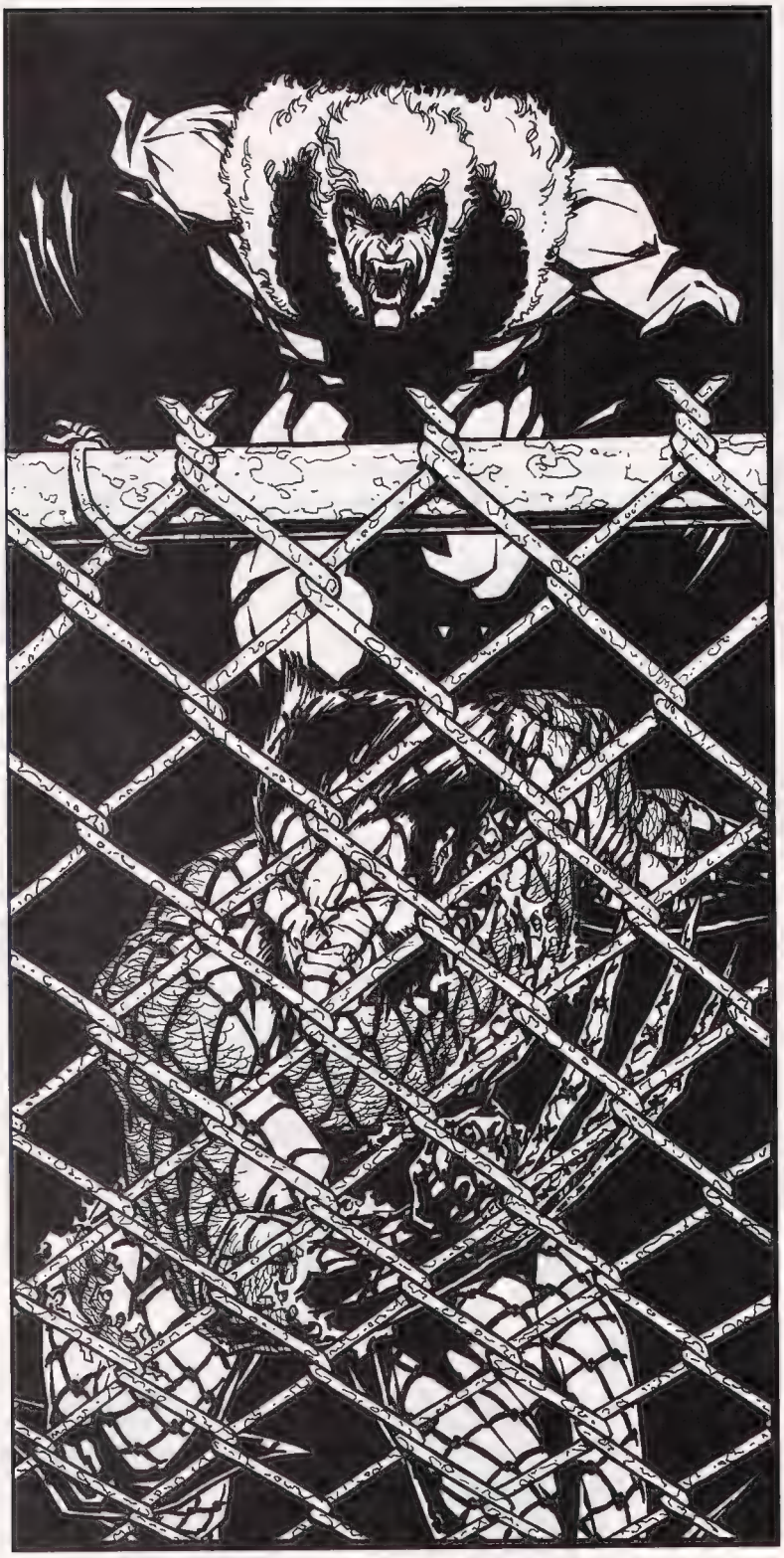
Batman's so forceful that his own shadow is a weapon. We don't even have to show him. Easily recognizable silhouettes can substitute for the characters in any number of ways. This poor guy is already beaten just by Batman's presence. Surrounded by so much absolute black, I haven't placed too much heavy shadow within the figure, but what there is of it bleeds into the black of Batman's shadow, keeping him firmly pinned against that wall.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Okay, let's put these techniques to practical use. Here's Wolverine in not too good of a situation. Having been through some sort of tussle, and apparently unaware of Sabretooth's presence, he's paused in front of a chain-link fence. Not much of an obstacle for Wolverine, but as a visual element it cages him, heightening the tension. To intensify that, I let the shadow of the fence fall across him. The cage now affects him "physically."

Also, I've kept almost all of Wolvie's shading from running into the black background so he remains separate from it, and more in the foreground. (To do that, I used internal halos here, just as I did in the "B" Thor figure from the first section of this column.)

In contrast, all of Sabretooth's blacks, including the dark areas of his costume, merge with the background, connecting him to it. (Yep, this time I went with the shading technique seen in the "C" Thor figure from the first section.) We get the effect of him emerging menacingly from the shadows. Could Sabretooth really sneak up on Wolverine? 'Course not, but it makes for a cool image.



And that's about it. Of course, shadows can also hide some shortcomings, like the fact that I can't draw a decent self-portrait. That's me to the right. No, really!

Thanks for reading, and beware the shadows.

Jim Calafiore, who illustrated this issue's killer villainous cover, likes to sleep with a Snoopy night light on. Hey, it's pretty spooky in the dark.

Drawing BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the show for WIZARD READERS' ART

People of the world unite! Every country needs a protector and *Wizard* #82's "A Captain America for All Countries" contest rallied the patriotism of our fans by asking them to draw the national heroes of nations outside the good ol' U.S.A. The contest's super winning soldier receives a Ron Garney drawn rendition of his entry, *Captain America* (vol. 3) #1-#4 signed by Garney, a Garney-signed *Captain America: Man Without a Country* trade paperback, a Cap T-shirt, poster and vinyl figure! Wow! Meanwhile, honorable mentions will get a random selection of the signed comics, the shirt, the poster and the vinyl figure.

GRAND-PRIZE WINNER

THIS ONE CAUGHT OUR EYE

CAPTAIN CHINA

ANTONIO JIMENEZ, Hicksville, N.Y.

THE BOOTY

LADY LUCK
SCOTT CASSIDY, New Brunswick, Canada

ISRAELI STAR
TOM ZERONIS, Pittsburgh, Pa.

SINGAPORE SLING
JEROME HINDS, Singapore

DOMINICAN REPUBLICAN
FRANK NATERA, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

HONORABLE MENTIONS Drawing BOARD

GERMAN TANK
DANIEL SOUCY, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

CAPTAIN ALGERIA
TEMMAR, La Queue en Brie, France

CAPTAIN BRAZIL
ALEXANDRE VALENCA ALVES BARBOSA, São Paulo, Brazil

Want your art to appear on one of these pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your entries to:

SUBMIT

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. **You must also include a color photo of yourself.** All entries are nonreturnable and become the property of Wizard Entertainment. Employees of Wizard Entertainment are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? All right, good luck!

famous MONSTERS

Features Sean Yseult of WHITE ZOMBIE

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MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS:

Recruit the New Supernatural!

ART CONTEST

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): One lucky night owl wins an original page of Ivan Reiss *Supernaturals* art signed by Brian Pulido, the four *Supernaturals* comics signed by Pulido, a cool *Ghost Rider Resurrected TPB* signed by Howard Mackie and a Supernaturals poster.

FIRST PRIZE (2): Two just as lucky Ghost Riders each win all the *Supernaturals* comics signed by Brian Pulido, a nifty *Ghost Rider Resurrected TPB* signed by Howard Mackie and a Supernaturals poster.

SECOND PRIZE (5): Five night creatures each fly away with a *Supernaturals* #1 and poster.

THE SPINE-TINGLING TEAM OF THE SUPERNATURALS (Brother Voodoo, Ghost Rider, Black Cat, Gargoyle, Satana and Werewolf By Night) is looking to recruit a new member and it needs you to help it out. Get out your pencils and create a brand-new, never-before-seen character who can be part of this team of magical heroes. Draw him, name him and send in the artwork. We'll choose the most creative as the winner.

When you're done creating the magical character, fill out the entry form below, attach it to the back of your drawing and send it in. Also, be sure to include two photos of yourself with the entry. Each photo (no Polaroids, please) should include your full name, date of birth, telephone number and address on the back. The most creative artists get the prizes and get featured in the pages of *Wizard*. Just remember: Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, marker, etc.). Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8"x 11 1/4". Do not fold, bend or roll artwork. Mail flat.

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DEADLY TEXT

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Marvel Entertainment, Chaos! Comics, their immediate families and people who cruise cemeteries at night for fun. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, e-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Recruit the New Supernatural!" Art Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your tight-filed magazine. All entry forms and all rights relating thereto become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All designs submitted in connection with this contest shall become property of Marvel Entertainment Group Inc. Entrants upon submission shall immediately and automatically assign all rights pertaining thereto including copyrights to Marvel Entertainment Group Inc. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by December 30, 1998.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be selected based on originality and creativity by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than February 3, 1999. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about January 13, 1999.

For a list of winners, available after January 13, 1999, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to "Recruit the New Supernatural!" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, attach your entry and photos and put it all in an envelope. Send it to:

"Recruit the New Supernatural!" Art Contest,
c/o Wizard Entertainment,
P.O. Box 118,
Congers, NY 10920-0118

"Recruit the New Supernatural!" Art Contest

CONTEST DEADLINE December 30, 1998!

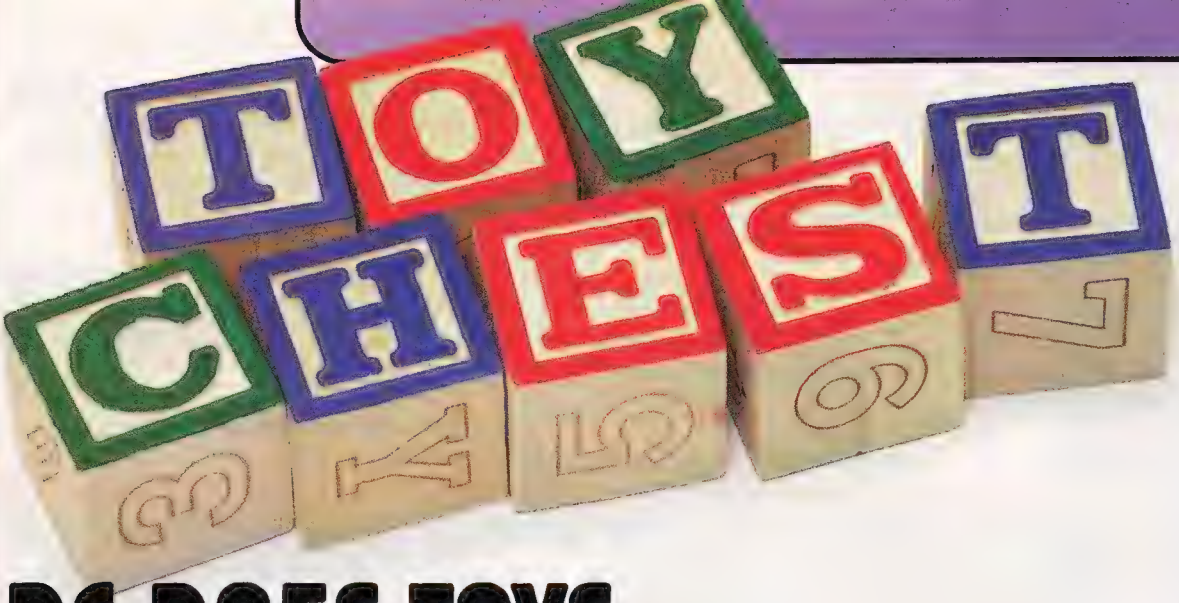
Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____ E-mail Address _____

DID YOU ATTACH YOUR ENTRY AND PHOTOS?



DC DOES TOYS

Wonder Woman makes a triumphant return to the world of plastic as part of DC Comics' first assortment of comic-based action figures after what seems like decades on *Wizard*'s "Wish List." Hot on the heels of November's release of Alfred E. Neuman and Spy vs. Spy from *Mad Magazine*, WW joins **Swamp Thing** and Wesley Dodds, the Golden Age **Sandman**, in a line of 6-inch scale, fully articulated action figures.

These toys promise to be faithful renditions of some of DC's most-popular characters, both in sculpting and choice of accessories. The Wonder Woman toy arrives complete with a battle ax and shield and is articulated at nine points. Our pal Swamp Thing is sculpted in all his swampy glory and has detachable hands which can be replaced with an enclosed rose bouquet. The Golden Age Sandman figure has 12 points of articulation and comes with a removable fedora, gas mask and pistol. Plus, Wesley Dodds' distinctive kisser is beneath the gas mask, complete with a pair of eyeglasses with resin lenses!

Variants for these figures will also be offered, each with some nifty extras. The Wonder Woman variant has a resculpted head, complete with a battle helmet, a spear and gold armor. Sandman's variant will have a redecoed costume and a resculpted gas mask, while the Swamp Thing variant will glow in the dark.

Look for all three of these figures to hit comic stores in April.

DC TOYS The exciting new DC toy line releases (from left): the Golden Age Sandman Wesley Dodds, Swamp Thing and Wonder Woman (a toy fan's dream).

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF DC COMICS.

BY TOM PALMER JR.

Visit Astro City...hockey-masked psychos...and a Japanimation invasion!

ASTRO-NOMICAL TOYS

They're finally here! Action figures from Kurt Busiek's *Astro City* have been on fans' wish lists almost as long as Wonder Woman, so it looks like Toy Vault has a hit on its hands with the upcoming **Samaritan** and **Confessor** toys. They are actually the first in a line of Astro City toys that will eventually include **Winged Victory**, **Jack-in-the-Box**, **Old Soldier** and **the Hanged Man**.

Samaritan and Confessor were designed by *Astro City* penciler Brent Anderson and cover artist Alex Ross to ensure the toys are faithful to the fan-favorite series. Both are sculpted in a 1-foot equals 1-inch scale (That means a 6-foot-tall comic character would make for a 6-inch action figure, naturally!) and will be offered in special variant editions. Samaritan arrives with a cape in his standard edition and arrives cape-less for a variant figure, inspired by his debut shown in *Astro City* (vol. 2) #6. But Confessor takes the cake as far as variants go. In addition to the regular Confessor, there will also be a vampiric version with fangs bared, as well as a version with Altar Boy's head.

These debut Astro City figures will arrive in comic stores in February.

ASTRO-BOYS Samaritan (above left) and Confessor launch the first wave of Astro City toys in February.

BONE UPDATE

We gave you guys a preview of the new Bone action-figure line from ReSaurus back in *Wizard* #85, and now here's a full look at **Fone Bone**, **Smiley Bone**, **Phoney Bone as Ahab**, **Thorn** and the **Rat Creature**. All of these toys are decked out with lots of accessories and should hit stores later this fall.

WISH BONE From left: Thorn, Rat Creature, Fone Bone, Smiley Bone and Phoney Bone as Ahab.

ASTRO CITY ACTION FIGURE PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI. BONE FIGURES COURTESY RESAURUS.

AHHH! SCARY TOYS!

Boo! McFarlane Toys' Movie Maniacs line is on the way and it's sure to scare the socks offa all the rest of your action figures. With first-ever figures for some of the big screen's most-memorable slashers and monsters, this line promises to be one of the creepiest sets o' toys around. First up are **Freddy Krueger**, from the "Nightmare on Elm Street" films, **Jason Voorhees**, from "Friday the 13th" and **Eve and Patrick** from "Species II." Look for quite a few surprises to follow, including Leatherface, from "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" and a host of other famous movie monsters.

FREDDY KRUEGER FROM 'A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET'

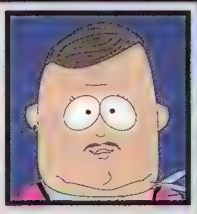
PATRICK FROM 'SPECIES II'

EVE FROM 'SPECIES II'

JASON VOORHEES FROM 'FRIDAY THE 13TH'

WISH LIST

THE 10 FIGURES THAT WIZARD WANTS TO SEE MADE



1) **SOUTH PARK** No more o' this plush crap or stupid key chains! We want real South Park action figures, complete with cool accessories and voice chips.

2) **BATTLE CHASERS** Just like Red Monika, toy fans are bustin' out all over for toys from *Battle Chasers*. How cool would a huge-ass Calibretto toy be? Super-cool, silly.

3) **THUNDERBOLTS** We're getting sick of asking for T-Bolts toys, so somebody better listen up! Make some toys of each team member side-by-side with his evil villainous alter-ego.

4) **BASTION** What self-respecting X-Men fan wouldn't want his very own Bastion action figure? A Bastion toy sure would be extra-nifty with a Nimrod sidekick figure.

5) **JADE** Jade's profile just went up about 50 notches now that she's got her own power ring. It's just another reason why we need a Jade figure, complete with snap-on emerald energy blasts.

6) **GURI** The Star Wars multimedia extravaganza "Shadows of the Empire" may be more than two years old, but fans are still clamoring for Prince Xizor's beautiful assassin.

7) **ORION** Darkseid's li'l nipper just has to be made into a toy. Throw in a rockin' Astro Harness and this Orion toy would zoom on to all sorts of great things.

8) **HERCULES** With Kurt Busiek and George Pérez's *Avengers* riding the top of the comic charts, a toy of this super-team icon is a natural. Give Herc some big rocks to pick up and throw at people, and the Prince of Power's in business!

9) **LOIS LANE** What's Superman without Lois Lane? Hasbro's just gotta make Supes' main squeeze into an action figure, complete with a mail-in offer for a Jimmy Olsen figure.

10) **AUSTIN POWERS** Yeah baby! With an "Austin Powers" sequel on the way, now's the time for Austin Powers toys. We want the International Man of Mystery , the uh...evil Dr. Evil and the shag-a-delic Vanessa.

Hey! Keep sending in your requests! You've already made a difference! Drop us a note with your "dream figures" at:

TOY WISH LIST
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920

Or e-mail us at:
WizardTGTC@aol.com

MOVIE MANIACS, LADY PERDITION AND A-LIST PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHRAUTH

LADY PENDRAGON

To celebrate the release of the new *Lady Pendragon* comic series, Action Toys is getting ready to release a 7-inch action figure of the comic's heroine. The Pendragon figure, which has five points of articulation, will include the legendary sword Excalibur and the Spear of Destiny. The figure arrives in comic stores this December, accompanied by Dark Pendragon, a special variant edition with black hair and armor.

PENDRAGON ALERT Image comic character Lady Pendragon slashes her way into the toy arena in December.

A-KO? ALL RIGHT! A-ko, the heroine from the hit Japanese film "Project A-ko" is set to debut in toy form from Antarctic Press.

A-KO, OKAY!

In a move that's sure to please anime fans the world over, Antarctic Press is producing the first American-made toys based on "Project A-ko," the landmark animated film from Japan. Joining a diverse lineup including Warrior Nun Areala, Flaming Carrot and Alley Oop, A-ko arrives with seven points of articulation, a sword, a briefcase and her pal C-ko. Look for A-ko in stores by April '99, and if all goes well, her enemy B-ko by late summer.

Like Wonder Woman, ToyFare *Assistant Editor Tom Palmer Jr. also wears star-spangled panties, but only on special occasions.*

stuff

COMIC BOOK MERCHANDISE YOU CAN BUY...

By David Borak and the *Wizard* Staff

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS RETAILER

Who among us doesn't like stuff? Whether it's Ghost Rider's Skull-So-Shiny, Black Goliath, Black Lightning and Black Bolt's hit album *Back In Black* or Cannonball's tennis balls, we're all suckers for comic-related merchandise. Each month, *Wizard* will strive to show you the latest and super-neatest in comic book statues, posters, pins, magnets, shirts and other goodies. In short, if it's cool, and if it's stuff, you'll find it here.

DYNO-MITES! Both Turok and his pal measure less than one foot.

DINOSAUR DIORAMA!

Acclaim and Playmates present the Turok Display Diorama Assortment ($17.75). There ain't no cotton-ball clouds on this 6-inch plastic diorama of Turok and his raptor enemy locked in battle. These figures pose on a detailed diorama display base. Look for it this November in comic and toy stores across the land.

FACE FRONT Candy will be thine in mass quantities if you wear the Grendel mask.

GRENDEL, UNMASKED!

In time for Halloween, Graphitti Designs will release the Grendel: Hunter Rose Mask ($4.95). The black-and-white assassin Grendel's mask is constructed from plastic and has black ribbon ties, an elastic band and slits for the eyes and mouth. Look for it now in comic book and costume shops.

PATRIOTIC PORCELAIN Captain America's shield can be hung from its golden cord. God bless America!

ORNAMENTAL AMERICAN

Creative License and Marvel Comics present an ornament for every good American in the form of the Captain America Hanging Shield ($15). This fine cold-cast porcelain full-color miniature shield measures 2.5 inches wide and hangs from a gold cord. It comes packaged in a full-color display box and is available now.

1/2 CAP, RANMA STYLE

Viz Video brings you the black Ranma Baseball Cap ($16.95) which features full-color images of the panda Genma on the front and the Ranma logo on the back. This baseball cap ships November 6.

BASEBEAR Shifty-eyed panda Genma graces the front of the Ranma 1/2 baseball cap.

MORE COFFEE, MAN?

This December, Dark Horse and Shannon Wheeler present the Too Much Coffee Man Oversize Coffee Mug ($12.95). This 20-ounce, white ceramic mug has color graphics by Wheeler on two sides which feature the TMCM logo and a picture of TMCM himself relaxing in a cup of coffee.

STRANGE BREW You can put too much coffee, man, into the Too Much Coffee Man mug.

ENDLESS FIGURES

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of The Sandman, Vertigo and DC Comics bring you the Endless PVC Set ($39.95), a low-cost version of the pewter set released earlier this year. This set of seven fully painted polyvinyl chloride figures features Dream, Death, Delirium, Destiny, Despair, Desire and Destruction. Based on sketches by Teddy Kristiansen, the figures range from 1.5 to 4 inches tall and stand on interlocking bases. The Endless PVC set is limited to 10,000 copies and will be available in December.

PLASTIC MEN The Endless figures come pretty (and painted)—in polyvinyl chloride.

HOT STUFF!!!!!!!!

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

WOLVERINE'S FERAL FIGURINE

He's the best there is at what he does and Creative License has him hung–on a limited-edition Wolverine Hanging Ornament ($29.95). This 6.75-inch cold-cast figure is limited to 5,000 pieces and shows Marvel's favorite mutant, claws extended, wearing his original blue-and-yellow costume. It's available now.

X-MIDGET He's 6 inches of fury. Guard your ankles.

stuff

MU-SICK Get some creepitude into your life with Resident Evil and Darkstalkers music CDs.

ANI-MUSIC

This November, Viz Video presents a series of music CDs based on popular anime and video games. *Night Warriors: Darkstalkers' Revenge: The Animated Series Original Soundtrack* ($16.95) contains 62 minutes of music in 21 tracks from the hit anime and video game series. You'll find tracks for individual characters, sinister mood music and dramatic action themes. The CD includes pages of never-before-translated interviews with the series' creators. Also look for the *Resident Evil 2 Original Soundtrack* ($16.95). This 67-minute CD follows the hit PlayStation game's story from the streets of Raccoon City to the final laboratory and beyond with all the music from the terrifying game. It also includes commentary by the original music producers.

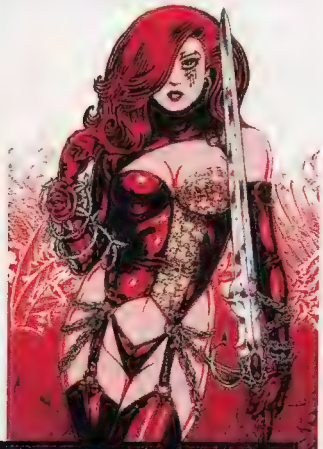
DAIRY DONE TO A 'T'-SHIRT

Milk and Cheese, Evan Dorkin's dairy products gone bad, are featured on the new T-shirt for the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. The CBLDF has spent eight years protecting the rights of the comic book industry, and now Milk and Cheese are helping them out on this 100 percent cotton, lactose-tolerant T-shirt ($20). The shirt features a color screen printing of Milk and Cheese proclaiming, "The Man Can't Bust Our Comics!" Look for it this November. All proceeds go to the CBLDF.

FREEDOM OF CHEESE Support a good cause and ultra-violet mayhem with this Milk and Cheese T-shirt.

GLOWING DAWN

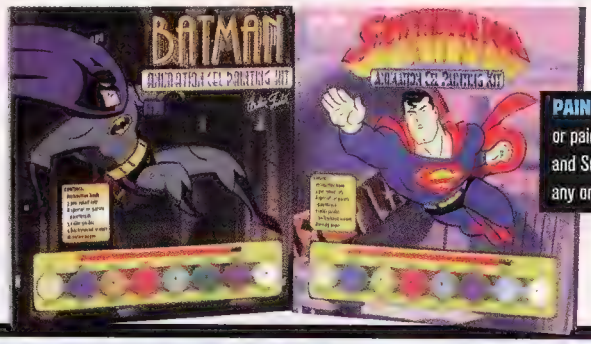
Sirius Comics presents the Dawn Limited Edition Blacklight Print ($60) guaranteed to darken up any room. This 13" X 19" black-light fluorescent print features an image of Dawn from a variant cover of *Dawn* #1. It was printed with special fluorescent inks that allow the print to glow under a black light. The print was illustrated and color hand-separated by Joseph Michael Linsner. It's limited to 500 copies and comes signed and numbered by Linsner.



VELVET ELVIS? The King looks like the Court Jester next to the scantily clad dawn.

DRAWING (AND PAINTING) DC

Walter Foster Publishing and DC Comics are giving folks the lowdown on DC's favorite goddess with their book *How to Draw Wonder Woman* ($7.95). The informative book by comic artists John Delaney and Ron Boyd takes readers step-by-step through drawing the Amazon princess and her most-hated foes. Also, check out Walter Foster Publishing's *Batman Animated Cel Painting Kit* and the *Superman Animated Cel Painting Kit* ($16.95 each), which let readers paint their own pre-inked cels. The books come with instructions, eight cel paints and a paintbrush, color guides, background scenes and drawing paper. All these books are available at book stores right now.



PAINT IT BLACK... or paint these Batman and Superman cels in any one of eight colors.

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special order 'em for ya!

YO! Are you a company who sells stuff cool enough to make the grade here? Let us be the judge of that. Send any info and/or samples to:

Stuff for Stuff
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

EXPLODING FROM THE PAGES OF THE COVEN!

ON SALE NOW!

AWESOME

Re:Gex is ™ and ® 1998 Awesome Entertainment

video STUFF

By Matthew Danish

Video killed the radio star, but who's complaining? Certainly not us. Welcome to "Video Stuff," a column where we let loose with news, previews, reviews and super-secret codes for the hottest, most spanktacular console and PC games around. Fire up the controllers...it's video game time.

A MOST DANGEROUS GAME

The hit comic *Danger Girl*'s beautiful heroines Abbey Chase, Sydney Savage, Natalia Kassle and Silicon Valerie will soon appear in a video game. Manufacturer n-Space Inc. recently announced that it has signed a contract with comic book creator J. Scott Campbell to bring the ladies of the famous spy agency to video gamers' living rooms. While the game platform has not been announced, rumors have the initial version coming to the Sony PlayStation in 1999. According to n-Space Inc. president Erik Dyke, "We will provide a gaming experience to rival all other action adventures."

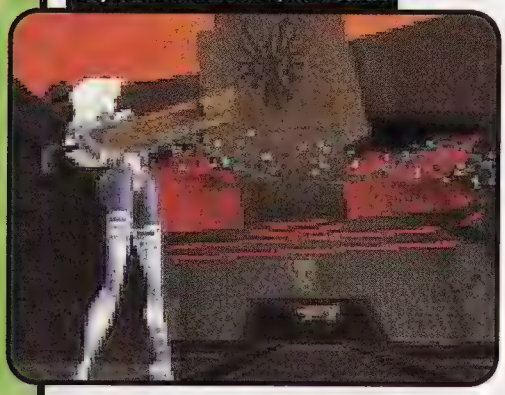
BULLET BABES J. Scott Campbell's Danger Girls shoot for video game fame.

IT'S A TRAP! The unfriendly skies are filled with Rebel scum.

X-WING 'ALLIANCE'

For the personal computer, LucasArts has announced the release of *X-Wing Alliance*, a Star Wars dogfight simulation which will debut in early 1999. The game launches up to four players on dozens of air-combat missions. Players can choose to fly the *Millennium Falcon*, Han Solo's Corellian craft, or one of many other sophisticated, high-tech fighters. Aircraft will come with hyperwarp engines, guns and laser cannons. The game will feature adventure elements, such as a storyline that reenacts the Rebel Fighters' struggle against the Galactic Empire at the Battle of Hoth. The game is being touted as a much more advanced version of the earlier *X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter*.

DEATH-ALON Build a bigger, badder, bustier Lady Death in Chaos! Comics' *Quake II* contest.



CHAOTIC CONTEST

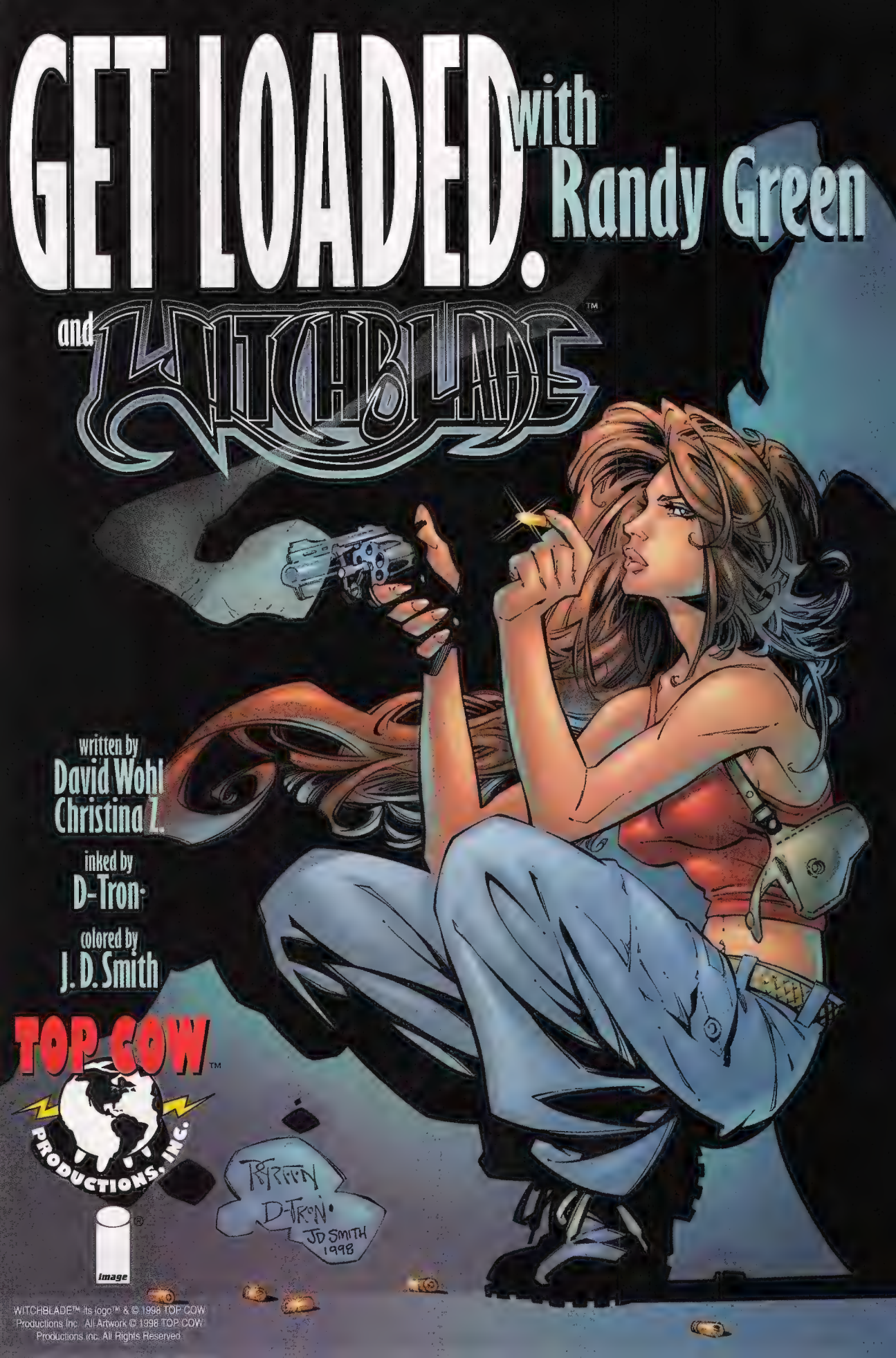
Chaos! Comics has announced on its Web site a contest which starts Oct. 1 and ends Dec. 31 in which fans are being challenged to create "player plug-in models," 3-D versions of such popular Chaos! Comics characters as Lady Death, to be used in the upcoming *Quake II* video game, which will be produced with Activision, 3-D fx and id Software. Chaos! will award computer games, action figures and many other cool prizes to those who create the best character adaptations. Entry forms and guidelines will be available in upcoming Chaos! titles. ■

UPAHEAD

The Titanic sails, the Spice Girls wail, Pocket Fighters prevail and more, more, more!!!

GET LOADED with Randy Green

and WITCHBLADE™



written by
David Wohl
Christina Z.

inked by
D-Tron

colored by
J. D. Smith

TOP COW™ PRODUCTIONS, INC.

image

WITCHBLADE™ its logo™ & © 1998 TOP COW Productions Inc. All Artwork © 1998 TOP COW Productions inc. All Rights Reserved.

STARSHIP TITANIC

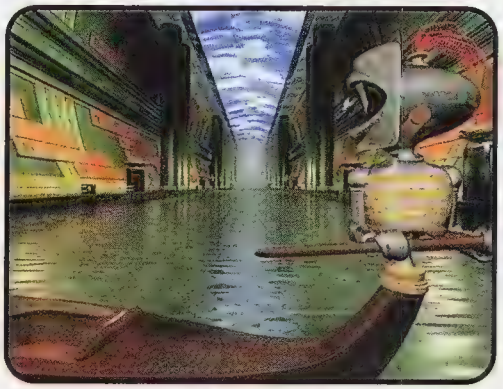
MANUFACTURER: Simon & Schuster Interactive
PLATFORM: PC
SUGGESTED RETIAL: $39.99; available now

What do you do when a gargantuan metallic spaceship careens through the ceiling of your apartment? Clamber aboard, solve some puzzles and ultimately unlock the mysteries that lie inside, of course. Welcome to the *Starship Titanic*, the luxury spacecraft that has proven to be as trouble-free as its seafaring namesake.

Simon & Schuster's *Starship Titanic* is the brainchild of noted fantasy author Douglas Adams (*Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*), and it shows. The game is jam-packed with Adams' wry brand of humor, from the quirky robots that populate the vast ship to the clever plot twists sprinkled throughout the game. Players explore the maze-like vessel via a point-and-click interface not unlike that found in *Riven*, and interact with the environment through the PET—Personal Electronic Thing. The PET allows players to communicate with *Titanic*'s robotic crew, keep an inventory, track game locations and activate devices such as elevators and televisions. A refreshing change from recent adventure games is the ability to manually enter statements and questions to game characters rather than choosing from a pre-determined list of responses.

Navigating the columns and marble-lined halls of *Starship Titanic* can be a daunting task; while the ornate rooms are rendered with amazing clarity, many areas of the craft are similar in design. Noteworthy is the in-flight magazine that accompanies the game; not only does it provide game clues and backstory, but it's also a tip of the hat to old-time gamers who'll recall the often vital props included with text-adventure games of the mid-'80s. ■ Dan DiGiacomo

TRY IT... If you enjoy old Infocom games, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* or *Grim Fandango*, grab a life preserver and stow away on *Starship Titanic*.



LEONARDO? Enjoy a DiCaprio-free ride this fall on the ill-fated, robot-filled *Starship Titanic*.

POCKET FIGHTER

MANUFACTURER: CapCom
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $39.99; available now

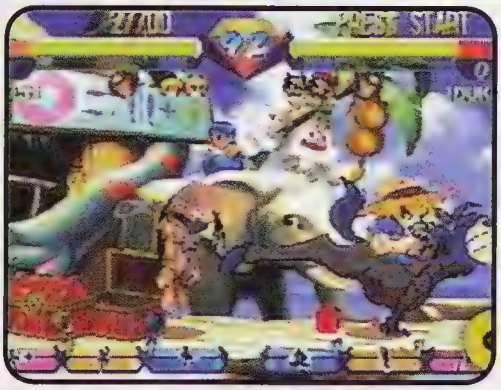
Fighting with midgets! Now that's a game! *Pocket Fighter* is a one- or two-player head-to-head fighting game with pint-sized characters, such as Ryu, Chun-Li and Morrigan borrowed from the Street Fighter and DarkStalkers video game series.

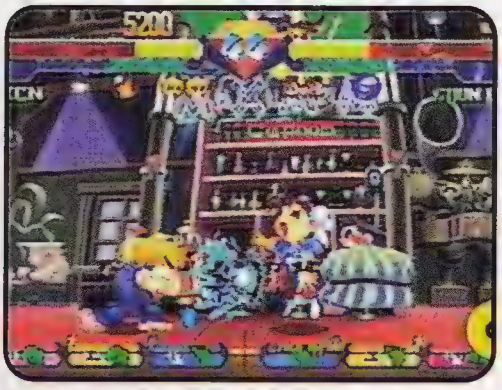
Pocket Fighter contains some fantastic combo moves, sports characters in new costumes and has as its ultimate aim to administer hyperbolic beatings. Ultimately, it's fun, but given the glut of 2-D fighting games, *Pocket Fighter* leans toward being standard fare with but a few neat touches thrown in. Players can collect and use weapons such as a flame hurled to burn adversaries, bombs which blow up the opposition, a rock that turns an enemy to stone and lightning to char the most hardened foe.

The game includes all the typical punches, kicks and judo throws, pick-me-ups as well as fantastic combos. One novelty is a customize mode in which players can create a new character from scratch. By winning fights in different modes, players are awarded ability cards which can then be taken back to the customize mode and selected to change a fighter's attributes. For example, winning in survival mode with a customized character earns "premium" cards. Take these cards back to customize mode and exchange them with others and your fighting ability improves dramatically.

Though the characters are short and blocky (they are, after all, pocket fighters) this head-to-head fight game is a fairly solid rendition in this time-honored genre. ■

TRY IT... If you like *Street Fighter II*, *Marvel Super-Heroes* or *DarkStalkers*, you should love *Pocket Fighter*.





TINY TOONS Pocket Fighters may look harmless, but they'll kick ass (above) and toss a world of hurt at their enemies.

MORE→

MMPPFF MUPF MUMMFF MUH MUPF MUMF MUMFUMFMUH MUMMPF

GAME BOY

Acclaim®

www.acclaim.net

This game is for mature audiences.

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SPICE: INTERACTIVE MUSIC EXPERIENCE

MANUFACTURER: Psygnosis
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $39.99; available now

With the departure of Ginger Spice and tabloids reporting the recent pregnancies of both Scary and Posh, this coming winter seemed to be growing particularly ominous for Spice Girl followers the world over. Thankfully, however, *Wizard* recently received a plain brown package (containing the Spice Girls video game) which should help us overcome the adversity.

This game is a winner and Spice Girl purists will appreciate the inclusion of Geri (a.k.a. Ginger), in the game; players can select her or any of the other four girls to traverse a virtual Spice World.

The Spice Network section contains actual footage of a Spice pillow fight in Japan, a Spice puppet show gone awry and an in-depth interview with the girls (Posh informs us—perhaps just a bit inanely—that the stupidest question she has been asked is "If you were a vegetable, which vegetable would you be?"). Other sections allow players to create elaborate dance routines and mix and match samples from the Spice Girls' most recognizable songs. Take a Spice to the mixing room and players will encounter a cool chap who advises on how to mix records. Similarly, the dance record section allows players to program each girl's dance routine separately—choosing from such moves as knee wiggle, twirl and walk and wave—then put the whole shebang together and/or save it on the card. There's also a TV show option where different camera angles can be programmed for the girls' dance routines. ■

TRY IT... If you like *Parappa The Rapper*, own a Spice Girls music CD or have ever wondered which Spice would triumph in a pillow war, you'll love *Spice*.

FLUFF DADDIES? Yeah! Girl Power! Spice Up Your Life! Kill us before we bandy about another catch-phrase.

CHEATSHEET

SPECIAL MOVES & SECRET CODES

OFF THE BEATEN 'BANJO'

Looking for a challenge after you've beaten *Banjo-Kazooie* for the Nintendo 64? Go into Banjo's house, stand in front of the fireplace and press the "up-C" button until you see the picture of Bottles the Mole.

- At this point, Bottles should congratulate you on finding his puzzle game.
- Complete the puzzle games to get seven special codes which will allow you to play as big-head Banjo, a big Kazooie, a big Banjo and Kazooie and other fun stuff.
- When you've completed the puzzle games, head to Treasure Trove Cove and find the puzzle-letter room located in the underwater castle.
- Enter the codes by stomping on the appropriate letters. Note that you will only be able to access the codes for the puzzle games you've completed.

BANJO-KAZOOIE

webline

IT CAME FROM THE WORLD WIDE WEB

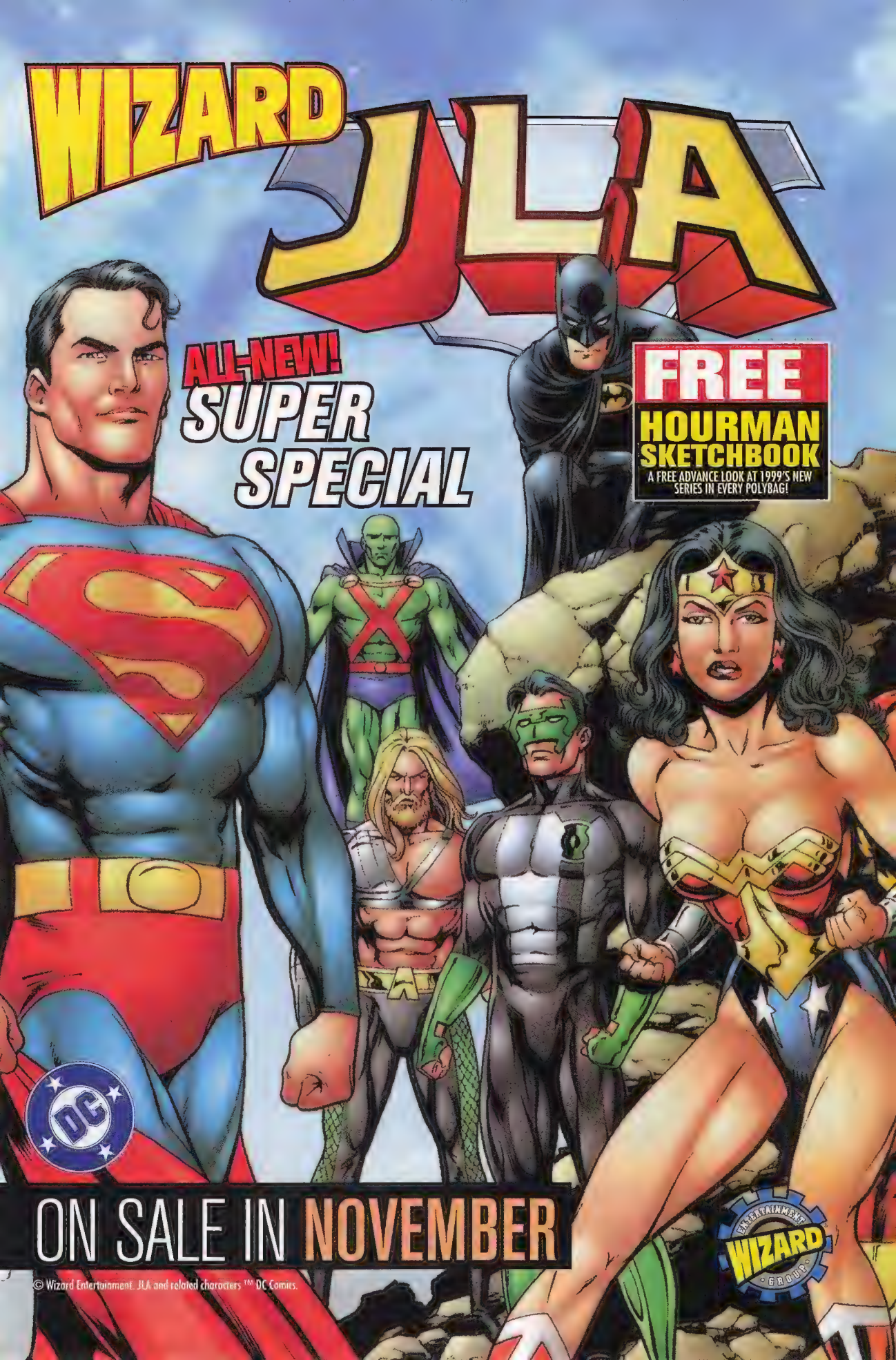
www.chaoscomics.com
Chaos! Comics' Web site, with contest guidelines plus news on Chaos! characters and an interview with Twisted Sister's Dee Snider.

www.wildstorm.com/html/links.htm
Danger Girl links as well as links to comic and sci-fi magazines.

www.northgrum.com/Corp_web/products_pages/b-2_bomber.html
Web site detailing information on the B-2 Spirit stealth bomber.

www.globalmedia.co.uk/spice/
The totally unofficial Spice Girls Home Page and more Spice links as well!

www.starshiptitanic.com/
Do not pass go, do not collect $200. But do visit this fun, overly colorful Web site for Douglas Adams' new video game. ■


WIZARD
JLA
ALL-NEW!
SUPER SPECIAL
FREE
HOURMAN SKETCHBOOK
A FREE ADVANCE LOOK AT 1999'S NEW SERIES IN EVERY POLYBAG!
DC
ON SALE IN NOVEMBER
© Wizard Entertainment. JLA and related characters ™ DC Comics.
WIZARD

HOMEMADE HEROES

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES

HEY, QUIT YER WHININ' YA BABIES. They don't make figures of your favorite characters? You think you could make better ones than already exist? Either way, it's time to put up or shut up. The figures you see here were crafted by ordinary readers just like you. Starting with simple store-bought action figures, these go-getters combined a little imagination with some stuff from around the house to create these cool figures. They will now be judged by the highest authority...us!

GRAND-PRIZE WINNER

DENGAR

Louis Hoefer of Lafayette, Ind.

The toilet-paper-covered bounty hunter looks more impressive as this redesigned 12-inch Hasbro G.I. Joe body with fully removable armor made from random hardware supplies and Epoxy. And Dengar also has 12 points of articulation...can you spot all 12?

WHAT WE GAVE AWAY!

The grand-prize winner walks away with a super-duper Superman statue sculpted by master artist William Paquet.

Many thanks to DC Comics for this nifty prize.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

CAPTAIN MARVEL

Rick Lundeen of Western Springs, Ill.

Tap a Kenner Batman & Robin movie collection Bruce Wayne head onto a Toy Biz Doc Samson body and Shazam! (Like you didn't see that joke coming.)

MARROW

Chris Thompson of Winnipeg, Canada

It looks like Chris took a Toy Biz Robot Fighters Jubilee body and glued a whole bunch of plastic fork fragments on as bones to create Marrow.

MARTIAN MANHUNTER

Christopher B. McFarlin of Wappingers Falls, N.Y.

The green Martian stems from a Toy Biz Silver Surfer figure with blue fabric for a cape and putty for the eyebrows, ears, belt, boots and "X" on the chest.

MR. HANKEY

Kyle R. Cunningham of Sonoma, Calif.

Kyle says that Mr. Hankey from "South Park" is made of a "Toy Biz Wolverine, fecal matter and a coat hanger." We don't believe him. We think it's authentic.

Do you want in on the fun? To enter the homemade figure contest, send at least TWO well-lit, clear, color photographs (**No Polaroids, and put 'em in cool or funny poses!**), along with your name, address, a DETAILED DESCRIPTION of how you created your figure, your full phone number (including area code) and even e-mail address to:

SUBMIT!

Homemade Heroes
c/o Wizard Entertainment
P.O. Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS

This list doesn't track the number of copies which a specific character sells each month. It doesn't pay attention to any kind of sales meter. This list is a roster of the 10 comic book characters with the strongest fan following—nothing more, nothing less.

1 SPAWN

Y'know, for a guy with a rotting-meat, festering sore-lookin' butt-ugly head, Spawn is surprisingly popular. Know why? He chose the right career: comic book hero. You can be uglier than Marty Feldman after being whupped with a burlap sack full of doorknobs and still make it in this biz. But can ya imagine if Spawn was, say, a door-to-door salesman instead? He's so repulso-friggin'-ugly that he'd scare off potential customers before he even got a chance to pitch 'em on the virtues of a set of encyclopedias or aluminum siding or a set of steak knives or whatever he was hawkin'. Ah, comics—you'll always be the last refuge of the misfits.

2 WOLVERINE

Okay, so Wolverine's *how* old? That's just it. We don't know. All we *do* know is that due to a series of false-memory implants, flashbacks that might or might not be true and the occasional World War II crossover with the WildC.A.T.s (Huh?), Wolverine's age is absolutely, positively indeterminate. But we've gotta assume he's a pretty old codger by now. Just check out them wrinkles. A little Oil of Olay could go a long way toward pretty-ing him up, but we'll bet the ol' Canucklehead don't much care what his mug looks like. He's too busy stomping ass to care.

3 WITCHBLADE

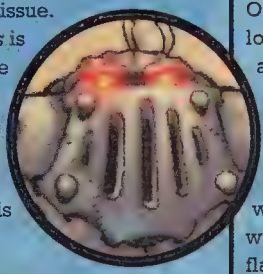
Then there's Sara Pezzini, li'l Miss Witchblade of 1998. She's much better-lookin' than Wolverine. She's also back in possession of the Witchblade, that nifty-neat mystical gauntlet that kicks bad guys' butts from here to Kalamazoo and still goes through this tin can like a hot knife through butter. Sara was actually Witchblade-less for a good long while, but as soon as she got it back in *Witchblade* #25 (Ever notice how major events in a comic character's life just *have* to happen in an issue divisible by 25?), ever-buddy started goin' bonkers for Sara again. You go, girl.

4 BATMAN

Everyone *thinks* Batman is the world's smartest superhero. That's an arguable point. Think about it. But how smart is a guy who dresses up like a giant rodent? That's right—rodent, as in "small, gnawing verminous animal that carries lice and disease." And Batman *chooses* to model himself after this example? Guess it could have been worse. What if it were a flying Chihuahua that came through Bruce Wayne's window that fateful night? He'd be Chihuahuaman! That wouldn't work. Those Taco Bell "gorditas" commercials don't exactly strike fear into the "cowardly, superstitious" hearts of criminals.

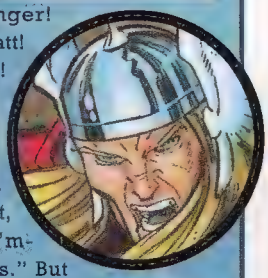
5 CALIBRETTO

He's got the armor of a tank! The firepower of a battalion! And he's kind to birds and other small animals! He's Calibretto, and he's chasin' battle (we guess that's what the title means) in *Battle Chasers* every issue.



Yep, Joe Madureira's *Battle Chasers* is about the most-bestest thing to strike comic fans' fancies since industrial-size cans of extra-strength Cheese Whiz. And the 'Chaser everyone seems to dig most? This gentle giant, this machine with a human heart—this war golem, Calibretto.

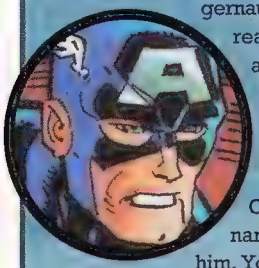
6 THOR



Yeah! Hair bands are back! Winger! Warrant! Poison! Twisted Sister! Ratt! And now—Thor and the Asgardians! Or not. Even though ol' Goldilocks looks like he stepped off a 1987 album cover, he's much more a super-charged superhero than a bad heavy-metal singer. In fact, the only tune he knows is "I'm-Gonna-Kick-Bad-Guy-Ass Blues." But when he belts it out that hammer of his becomes the world's most-powerful percussion instrument! You'll be flat when he's done!

7 CAPTAIN AMERICA

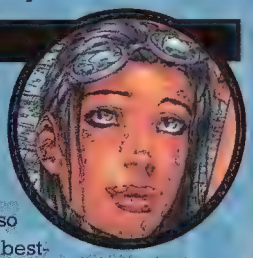
Know what makes Cap so gosh-darned cool? He commands more r-e-s-p-e-c-t than Aretha Franklin. Take a giant juggernaut powerhouse like Thor, who you just read about. Thor's a bit on the (ahem) arrogant side. But when Thor assembles with the Avengers, he knows Cap's the man in charge. He'll follow Cap straight through the gates of Hell, or even Cleveland. Why? Because Cap's been kickin' butt and takin' names for so long, everyone respects him. You da man, Cap!



8 NIGHTWING

Secrets of comicdom, volume 153 (Collect 'em all!): Any "normal" person in comics must take an I.Q. test and be proven so flat-out stupid that he can't figure out secret identities, no matter how simple. It's true. So congratulations, citizens of Blüdhaven! Despite the fact that *Nightwing* gains popularity and readership every month, you still can't figger out that Dick Grayson is Nightwing, even though his mask is about the same size of two bottle caps. Get your eyes checked.

9 FATHOM



Hey, baby! Wanna take a dive with me? Well, if yer gonna get wet, Aspen Matthews is a pretty good partner to take the plunge with. Not only does she have funky aquatic powers, but she's also the star of *Fathom* #1, the single best-selling comic of 1998. And best of all (hint, hint), if something happens to go...wrong on your dive, maybe she'll give you a little mouth-to-mouth action. Hey, it's in the superhero rule book! They gotta save you or the union kicks 'em out! Diver down!

10 DAREDEVIL

For those of you keeping track at home, it has been approximately 128 months since anyone's given this much of a rip about Daredevil. Why the sudden interest? Well, at the risk of sounding repetitive, there's that Kevin Smith guy.

He's writing the new *Daredevil* series, and he's such a swell fella, he's even letting his buds Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti draw it. Put it all together and you've got big popularity. Even a blind man could see that.

MORT OF THE MONTH

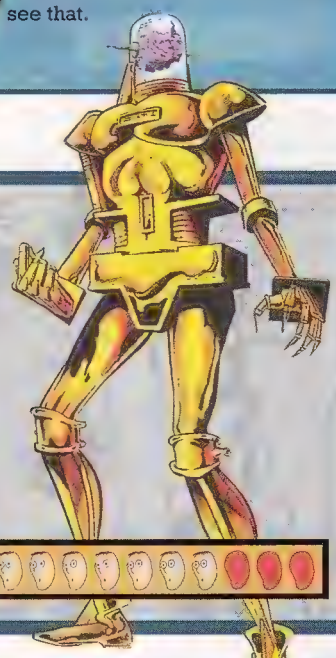
ONE LAME-ASS CHARACTER

DOCTOR SUN

File this Mort under: Defeated by H.E.R.B.I.E. the Robot!

Yep. Seems Doctor Sun, a scientist who figured out how to make brains live outside the human body, got his own brain (Oooh, irony!) put in your basic robot body. But while trying to kill the Fantastic Four and take over the world and stuff, he was blown up real good by the horrible cutesy sidekick from the "Fantastic Four" cartoon that was wedged into the book—H.E.R.B.I.E.! The move saved the day and, thankfully, wrote H.E.R.B.I.E. out of *Fantastic Four* forever.

So Sun got offed by a bad marketing crossover. Kinda makes you wonder if that's *really* a brain up there or just three pounds of chewed bubble gum.



MORTOMETER

picks

THE MUST-READ COMICS SHIPPING IN NOVEMBER

book of the month

SUPERMAN: PEACE ON EARTH

DC COMICS Peace on Earth and good will toward man takes on an entirely new meaning when Earth's mightiest hero tackles one of humanity's greatest problems. This holiday season, Superman decides to give the people of the world a great gift: an end to hunger. But there are an awful lot of mouths to feed out there and the Man of Steel is in for some very unexpected resistance. Our advice? Circus Peanuts and pie for everybody! By Paul Dini and Alex Ross. $9.95

AKIKO #30

SIRIUS Bornstone's a giant. A giant ass, that is! Little Earth girl Akiko and her pals need the behemoth to cough up a magic potion so they can save a friend's life. But even after bribing Bornstone with all sorts o' goodies, the jerk still won't give it out. That's when the young boy Kell steps forward to tell the giant what's what. Hoo, boy. By Mark Crilley. $2.50

AQUAMAN #51

DC COMICS Call him King Noble. Except, noble he ain't! That's 'cause this joker just broke Aquaman's hook and is goading our hero into fighting him...without powers. To prove he's large and in charge, the aquatic avenger will need to get his head together before Noble rips that off, too. By Erik Larsen, Eric Battle and Norm Rapmund. $1.99

AVENGERS #12

MARVEL The exclamation point was made for this issue! Earth's Mightiest Heroes—the Avengers—battle those no-good villains-turned-heroes—the Thunderbolts! An Avenger will be stuck in the middle! Another will see a rebirth! The world will be threatened! And we can't stop using exclamation points! Hose us down! By Kurt Busiek, George Pérez and Al Vey. And check out the *Avengers: Under Siege* trade paperback, which reprints the Avengers' epic struggle to retake Avengers Mansion from the villainous Masters of Evil (who later became the Thunderbolts). By Roger Stern, John Buscema and Tom Palmer. $2.99—*Avengers #12;* $16.95—*Under Siege*

AVENGERS FOREVER #2 (OF 12)

MARVEL The battle cry goes, "Avengers Assemble." And assemble they do! From the past, present and future, a whole new team of Avengers forms. Thing is, no one knows who put this team together or why. Chances are it has somethin' to do with that time-controlling villain Kang or his alter-ego Immortus. Of course that shadowed figure from Avengers' history probably has something to do with it, too. By Kurt Busiek, Carlos Pacheco and Jesus Merino. $2.99

BATMAN: CRIMSON MIST

DC COMICS The blood is back! Yep, it's the third and final hardcover installment in this "Elseworlds" trilogy.

MR TITLES DENOTED WITH AN MR CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

Batman's a bloodsucker—and as dead as the Soviet Union, with a stake stuck in his chest. But when Gotham City's attacked by monsters, two men must make a momentous decision—do they revive the undead Dark Knight or buy a lot of expensive door locks? By Doug Moench, Kelley Jones and John Beatty. **$24.95**

BONE #35

CARTOON BOOKS Hey, something smells like old people! Gran'ma Ben's back from who-knows-where and she's got some stuff to tell Phoney Bone. Stuff like the identity of tavern owner Lucius' fiancé. (Ten bucks says it's that Spice Girl chick Geri Halliwell.) By Jeff Smith. **$2.95**

CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS HARDCOVER

DC COMICS It's the end of the world(s) as we know it. When the evil-minded Anti-Monitor fuses Earth-1, Earth-2, Earth-3 and so on, DC's superheroes band together to stop this menace. But the Anti-Monitor has mischief in mind and a lot (we mean a LOT) of morticians are gonna be very happy when all is said and done. *Crisis* reprints the 12-issue continuity-altering mini-series of the same name. By Marv Wolfman, George Pérez, Jerry Ordway, Mike DeCarlo and Dick Giordano. **$99.95**

DAREDEVIL #3

MARVEL Things get biblical as a plague rains down on Daredevil and his friends. Karen Page falls into a pothole of trouble, Foggy's up to his left ear in bad news and the Man Without Fear himself (Daredevil) is kidnapped by an enigmatic group that wants the baby our hero's been protecting. And hey, is the kid the savior or the Antichrist? By Kevin Smith, Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti. **$2.50**

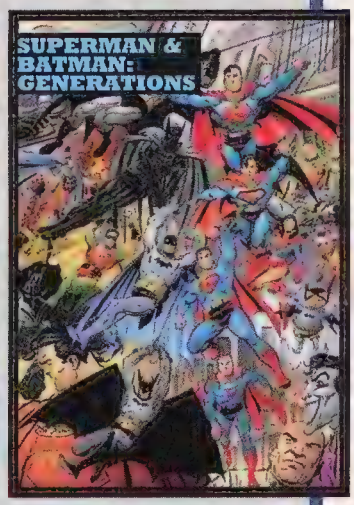
newreleases

FIRST TIME OUT

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #1 (Marvel) Spider-Man's fighting a souped-up Scorpion, so why's Peter Parker watching the fight from the sidelines? $2.99

BATMAN/HELLBOY/STARMAN #1 (DC Comics) Batman, Starman and the devilish Hellboy form an alliance to pulverize some magic-using Nazis stupid enough to kidnap the Golden Age Starman. $2.50

BIRDS OF PREY #1 (DC Comics) Cruise into adventure on a luxury boat with Black Canary and her wheelchair-bound partner Oracle as they investigate the disappearance of some snooty rich folk. $1.99



CAPTAIN AMERICA/ CITIZEN V (Marvel) Baron Zemo's rediscovered "Particle X," which sounds like it should give rugs a keen shine, but is probably pretty dangerous–and Captain America and Citizen V join forces to stop him. $3.50

DEITY II: CATSEYE #1 (Awesome/Hyperwerks) Young turk Digby fights to protect the curvaceous young woman known as "II" from the disreputable Clan of 1000 Masks. $2.95

LADY PENDRAGON #1 (Image) In ancient Briton's darkest hour, the Queen of Camelot picks up the mantle of the warrior Lady Pendragon to put things right. $2.50

LOVE IN TIGHTS #1 (Amaze Ink/Slave Labor Graphics) Even superheroes fall in love. Now learn what they do when they're done fighting crime and in the mood for a little…companionship. Oh, baby! $2.95

MARVEL KIDS BOOKS (Marvel) Step into elementary-school fun with these superhero-based books for readers 5 years old and up. Young Franklin Richards tells about his trip to Mars with the Fantastic Four in *Fantastic Four: Franklin's Adventures*, and in *Incredible Hulk: Project Hide*, the super-strong Hulk needs kids' help to hide from the Gamma G.E.A.K.S. Help Spider-Man solve a mystery in *Spider-Man Mysteries*, and Wolverine and Storm help children deal with their mutant powers in *X-Men: Mutant Search R.U.1?* **$3.49 each**

MARVEL REMIX: FANTASTIC FOUR #1 (Marvel) Rocket back in time to the Fantastic Four's first meeting with the Inhumans, this time focusing in on the relationship between the Human Torch and Crystal the Inhuman. $2.99

PETER PARKER: SPIDER-MAN #1 (Marvel) The old Spider-Man (Peter Parker) searches for the new Spider-Man, and the never-before-seen baddie Ranger attempts to waste a U.S. senator. $2.99

STARMAN 80-PAGE GIANT #1 (DC Comics) There are more Starmen than there are stars in the cosmos. Learn about each and every one (okay, *most* of them) in this 80-page tome. $4.95

SUPERMAN & BATMAN: GENERATIONS–AN IMAGINARY TALE #1 (DC Comics) Go generation jumping with Superman and Batman as they battle robots in 1939, and Lex Luthor and the Joker in 1949. $4.95

WEBSPINNERS: TALES OF SPIDER-MAN #1 (Marvel) Ever wonder what motivates a man to wear a fishbowl on his head? Well, here's your chance to find out as Spider-Man villain Mysterio takes center stage. $2.99

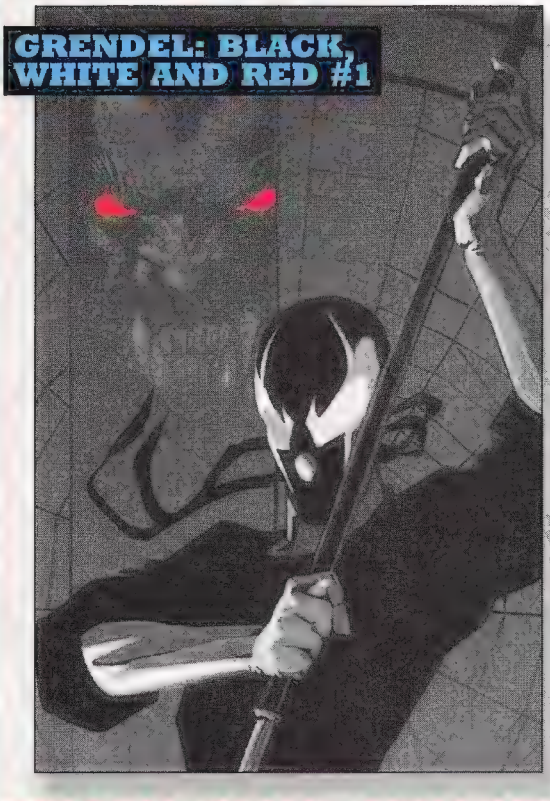
YOUNG JUSTICE: SECRET FILES #1 (DC Comics) Learn all about DC's newest (and youngest) teenage super-team Young Justice. $4.95

THE FLASH #144

DC COMICS This meeting of the Poorly Named Superheroes Guild is called to order. Charter member Cobalt Blue will be discussing his tragic origin, setting the stage for Flash's epic "Chain Lightning" storyline. It seems that besides having a stupid name, Blue also has some ties to Silver Age Flash Barry Allen's family. Go figure. By Mark Waid, Brian Augustyn, Pop Mhan and Chris Ivy. **$1.99**

GREEN LANTERN #108

DC COMICS Jade's the greenest Green Lantern around—literally and figuratively. Not only is she new to this ring-slinging business, but her skin's the same color as a puking seaman. While GL Kyle Rayner is lost in space trying to revive the Green Lantern Corps, Jade and Justice Leaguer Wonder Woman face off against a villain who can control Earth's plants. By Eric Luke, Darryl Banks and Terry Austin. **$1.99**



GRENDEL: BLACK, WHITE AND RED #1 (OF 4)

DARK HORSE Ultra-violent assassin Grendel has returned from comic book limbo and a host of artists gather together to tell his story in three colors. Learn what it's like to be a lawyer for the devil's disciple and lots more gruesomeness. By Matt Wagner, Tim Sale, John Paul Leon and more. "This series is going back and telling some of the very many untold tales of Hunter Rose [the first Grendel]." Wagner says. "Readers can expect to see important parts in his origin, including the very origin of the Grendel mask as worn by Hunter Rose." **MR. $3.95**

HITMAN #33

DC COMICS That rumbling noise you hear is a German Tiger tank powering through the African capital of Tynanda. Atop the tank, pointing and shooting obscenely huge guns in all directions, is superpowered hitman Tommy Monaghan and his mercenary goon friends. Y'see, folks, the revolution has indeed come to Tynanda. Down with *el Presidente!* Power to the people! By the people's collective of Garth Ennis, John McCrea and Garry Leach. **$2.50**

INVISIBLES (VOL. 2) #21

VERTIGO/DC COMICS Quite frankly, we don't understand what you see in this comic. Hah! Get it, they're Invisib.... Anyway, time-traveler Ragged Robin goes back to the future to save the world. There she's met by fellow Invisible King Mob, and the two have a very romantic time before everything we know disappears like cake in front of Rosie O' Donnell. By Grant Morrison, Chris Weston and Ray Kryssing. **MR. $2.50**

IRON MAN #12

MARVEL Once upon a time, there was a good knight named Tony Stark who spent most of his time in a suit of armor. Stark liked the suit so much, he built another one and called it War Machine. Then War Machine attacked the armored Stark and his friend Warbird, which wasn't very nice. And nobody lived happily ever after at all. By Kurt Busiek, Patrick Zircher and Larry Mahlstedt. Iron Man teams up with Captain America to save the world and fight the huge-headed MODOK in *Iron Man/Captain America '98*. By Busiek, Mark Waid, Roger Stern, Zircher and Randy Emberlin. **$1.99—#12; $3.50—*Iron Man/Captain America '98***

JLA #25

DC COMICS "Ultra-Marines Saga," Part 2 (of 3). Ten-hut! *Semper fi*! Be all you can be! The Ultra-Marines have been sent by their shady boss Gen. Eiling to kick the Justice League of America's ass. Unfortunately, the superpowered Ultra-Marines have government sanction, so when the JLA defends itself, its members become public enemy No. 1. By Grant Morrison, Howard Porter and John Dell. **$1.99**

JLA/TITANS #2 (OF 3)

DC COMICS The fifth law of superhero dynamics reads thusly: superhero teams are physically unable to interact peacefully without first stomping on each other. So...the Justice League meets the Titans and ringside seats will cost you a mere $2.95. But the stakes for this fight are tremendous—if either side loses, you can kiss the world goodbye. By Devin K. Grayson, Phil Jimenez and Andy Lanning. **$2.95**

MAGE: THE HERO DISCOVERED COLLECTED EDITIONS VOL. III AND IV

IMAGE Batter up. Swing for the fences with Kevin Matchstick and his enchanted baseball bat, with these two trade paperbacks reprinting issues #5-#8 of the first *Mage* series. Check out Matchstick's time in the Big House and his duel with the demented Umbra Sprite and his evil toadies the Gracks. By Matt Wagner. **$5.95—Vol. III; $4.95—Vol. IV**

NIGHTWING #27

DC COMICS Forget the physics degree—all you need to know about Torque is that he's a vicious killer. Nightwing and Huntress are both hunting him down and, without knowing it, one of these two heroes will get close to this psychotic fiend. A little too close. By Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story. **$1.99**

PREACHER #45

VERTIGO/DC COMICS Today's gospel is on forgiveness. We'll have none of it, especially since one-eyed preacher Jesse Custer is going to have himself a showdown with the forces of evil in Salvation, Texas. And, while the preacher keeps law and order, the infamous Meat Man gears up for some extra-rare evil. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **MR. $2.50**

ROBIN #60

DC COMICS One of Robin's schoolmates has been murdered and the Boy Wonder's out to send the killer to a place where soap on a rope is required fashion wear. Plus, a mysterious someone has impregnated Robin's girlfriend the Spoiler and an equally mysterious someone is using the name "Alvin Draper" to accompany her to her birthing classes. By Chuck Dixon, Staz Johnson and Stan Woch. **$1.99**

SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #69

VERTIGO/DC COMICS The beginning of the end starts here. Wesley Dodds (the Golden Age Sandman) receives news of his long-lost brother, his girlfriend Dian Belmont starts asking some hard questions and a soldier with evil in his eyes begins to lay siege to New York City. Brought to you one last time with gusto by Steven T. Seagle and Guy Davis. "The mystery this time centers around a World War I veteran," Seagle says. "With the onset of World War II, he seems to be taking some of his old company in New York City. So patriotism becomes a much bigger theme in this story arc and we've jumped ahead and are finally finding ourselves in 1940." **MR. $2.50**

SAVAGE DRAGON #55

IMAGE There's a new Savage Dragon in town (the old one's deader than Ted Danson's career). But this one wears... sneakers? Trust us, ya gotta see it to believe it. And while

alsoshipping

MORE BOOKS TO GET

BATMAN BOOKS (DC Comics) Millionaire playboy Bruce Wayne pleads for Congress to save earthquake-wrecked Gotham City in *Batman* #561, and in *Detective Comics* #728, Nightwing and Robin defend the rubble of Gotham against two brand-new villains. **$1.99 each**

CAPTAIN AMERICA BOOKS (Marvel) That cool cat Captain America evaluates his relationship with spy Sharon Carter in *Captain America* #13, while the good captain steps into adventure with Iron Man in a tale from the past told in *Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty* #5. **$1.99 each**

CURSE OF THE SPAWN #27 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) Spawn's brother (Marc Simmons) and an F.B.I. agent hunt down the vicious–and not very nice–killer Suture. **$1.95**

THE DARKNESS #20 (Top Cow/Image) Darkness wielder Jackie Estacado discovers there's a bounty on his head. **$2.50**

FANTASTIC FOUR #13 (Marvel) After the sordid events of the "Live Kree or Die" storyline, Ronan the Accuser is dishing out justice to those responsible. And everyone's guilty where the Accuser's concerned–especially the Fantastic Four. **$1.99**

FATHOM #4 (Top Cow/Image) Marine biologist Aspen Matthews learns the truth about her connection to the water–and becomes very, very afraid of it. **$2.50**

PUNISHER #3 (Marvel) Learn all about the Punisher's new origin, which is a lot different from his old origin. **$2.99**

SPAWN #80 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) Is Spawn directly responsible for the bloodthirsty "Exterminator" killings? Hmmm. Could be. **$1.95**

SPIDER-MAN: CHAPTER 1 #3 (Marvel) Peter Parker meets J. Jonah Jameson, and the no-goodniks Vulture, Tinkerer and Dr. Octopus scheme to make Spider-Man's life miserable. **$2.99**

SUPERMAN BOOKS (DC Comics) Metropolis reels from the attack of...Crazytop? And ex-*Daily Planet* employees deal with their unemployment in *Action Comics* #750. In *Superman: Man of Steel* #85, the low-down Morgan Edge enlists two of Darkseid's goons to create a creature to kill Superman. The hero Outburst debuts in *Superman* #141 and paves the way for a brand-new super-team, the Supermen of America. Finally, in *Superman: The Man of Tomorrow* #12, Metropolis is plunged into darkness by a being of living lightning. **$1.99–each; $2.95–*Action Comics***

TALES OF THE DARKNESS #4 (Top Cow/Image) Hunt for a new host for the Darkness power in the age of the Spanish Inquisition. **$2.95**

VERTIGO: WINTER'S EDGE II (Vertigo/DC Comics) Death doesn't take a holiday. Instead, she's featured in a short story by Neil Gaiman, along with plenty of other tales by plenty more comic bigwigs. **MR. $6.95**

WITCHBLADE #28 (Top Cow/Image) Sara Pezzini's recently recovered Witchblade gauntlet is acting very violent these days–perhaps so violent Pezzini can't control it. **$2.50**

WOLVERINE #133 (Marvel) Hardened felons from a prison planet visit Earth and try to enlist Wolverine to liberate the planet's inmates. **$1.99**

on the edge

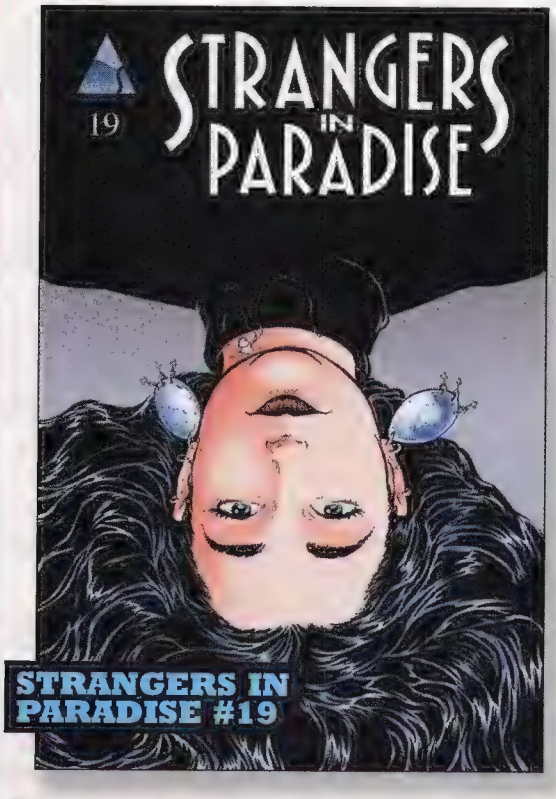
BIG 'UNS: GIANT WOMEN ON THE RAMPAGE #1 (AC COMICS)

There's nothing like good, clean fun, and this is *nothing* like good clean fun. Trod in the massive footsteps of five over-sized *femmes* whose butts should rightly have their own ZIP codes. Thrill to the adventures of "Threeta," who combines three women into one gigantic form, and the evil conqueror Queen Drusilla, who finds she's too big for the combined britches of the civilized world. By various sick minds. **$9.95**

you're soaking in the new fin-head, the foul brother of William Jonson does something *really* foul. By Erik Larsen. **$2.50**

STRANGERS IN PARADISE #19

ABSTRACT STUDIO Art for art's sake is okay, but nudity for art's sake is even better! When Katchoo the artist asks her friend Francine to drop her drawers and pose nude, she inadvertently dredges up a painful memory for her subject. A long time ago, Francine posed nude, you see, and the results were displayed in her college's statue garden. Ah, education at its finest. By Terry Moore. **$2.75**



STRANGERS IN PARADISE #19

SUPERMAN ADVENTURES #27

DC COMICS He'd kick your puppy, rag on your mother and then eat your last White Castle hamburger. And he'd laugh while doing it. He's the super-evil businessman/criminal Lex Luthor, and he's goin' crazy trying to kill his arch-enemy Superman. Dive into Luthor's mind to see what drives him. Just make sure to take a shower afterwards. By Mark Millar, Aluir Amancio and Terry Austin. **$1.99**

THOR #7

MARVEL Send in your insurance claims for the property damage now. When the home of the Greek gods (Olympus) is attacked, it seems the missing Asgardians are responsible. Thor steps in to solve the mystery, but the god Zeus just plain wants to kick some butt. So it's Thor vs. Zeus, with Zeus' son Hercules stuck in the middle. By Dan Jurgens, John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson. **$1.99**

THUNDERBOLTS #22

MARVEL Back when the Thunderbolts were the Masters of Evil, Atlas was called Goliath, and he almost beat the Avenger Hercules to death. Well, Atlas is about to learn that payback sucks, 'cause Hercules is a-comin' with fists a-blazin'. But does Atlas even want to defend himself? And which Avenger is gonna step up and change the Thunderbolts forever? By Kurt Busiek, Mark Bagley and Scott Hanna. **$1.99**

TRANSMETROPOLITAN #17

VERTIGO/DC COMICS "Year of the Bastard," Part 5 (of 6). Grizzled journalist Spider Jerusalem finds he's more popular than the Spice Girls. Stuck covering a political election, Spider decides it's time to throw a monkey wrench into the whole damn system. So he engages in a little—okay, a lot—of sabotage. By Warren Ellis, Darick Robertson and Rodney Ramos. **MR. $2.50**

UNCANNY X-MEN #363-#364

MARVEL After leaving their mentor Professor Xavier to rot in federal custody for months, the X-Men finally go looking for him. Along the way, they battle the super-creeps in the Brotherhood, find Xavier, and are forced to team up with the aforementioned creeps to defeat the mad computer Cerebro. Seems Cereby's unlocked the Xavier protocols, which kinda reveal how to kill the X-Men. Just one more reason to hate technology. By Steven T. Seagle, Chris Bachalo, Leinil Francis Yu and Tim Townsend. **$1.99 each**

USAGI YOJIMBO #25

DARK HORSE Drink deep of the Japanese folk tale of "Momotaro," told by the sword-swinging bunny Usagi. Usagi lays down the popular tale of a hero born from a peach who goes out to battle Ogres with the help of three very special companions. By Stan Sakai, who says, "It's one of the most well-known of all the Japanese folk tales, but unfortunately, Japanese folk tales are not very known in the Western world. I've always wanted to do adaptations of some of the better-known Japanese stories and 'Momotaro' is a great place to begin." **$2.95**

X-MEN #83

MARVEL For months, the only place you could find Professor Charles Xavier was on the back of a milk carton. Now, the X-Men are closing in on their leader's location, and their search takes them to a distant part of the globe. But it seems Xavier's not there—just a strange being who could restore the professor's powers and help the X-Men crush the evil pile of silicon circuitry and microchips known as Cerebro. By Joe Kelly, Adam Kubert and Mark Farmer. **$1.99**

YOUNGBLOOD #3

AWESOME Tremble before the villainous menace of...Jack O'Dandy? Hmm. The guy is team Youngblood's most-feared enemy, but with a name like that you'd figure he'd be selling daisies by the side of the road somewhere. Anyway, Dandy's got it in for Supreme's sister, the überabe heroine Suprema, and has some nasty surprises for the team, none of which include flowers. By Alan Moore, Steve Skroce and Lary Stucker. **$2.50**

characterprofile

RAP SHEET

GAMBIT

FIVE-FINGER DISCOUNT: A master thief, Gambit's suspected in more than 100 unsolved felonies worldwide. He even stole the Gem of Cytorrak, the ruby that gives Juggernaut his powers. (*Uncanny X-Men* #361)

MESMERIZING: With his "Jedi Mind Trick," Gambit can charm just about anyone in French or English. (*Uncanny X-Men* #266)

LOCKIN' LIPS: After years o' torture, Gambit finally did the deed with Rogue (unfortunately, off panel) while her powers were in remission. (*Uncanny X-Men* #349)

PINK EYE: Thanks to his mutant power, Gambit's got no pupils! He can apparently use his eyes, instead of his hands, to charge stuff up. (*Uncanny X-Men* #266)

RECYCLABLE: Gambit's bo staff is made of some wacky resilient substance that lets it get charged with explosive energy so it can be re-used again and again. (*X-Men* #81)

BETRAYAL: Before joining the X-Men, Gambit led Mr. Sinister's Marauders into the Morlock tunnels, where the poor mutants were massacred. (*Uncanny X-Men* #210-213, #350).

CANCER, MAN: Gambit sets a bad example by smoking. If he were to stop today, it'd take roughly 10 years for his lungs to heal. (*Uncanny X-Men* #266)

LONGEVITY: Bishop recognized Gambit as "The Witness," the withered old man who last saw the X-Men alive and was believed to be the infamous X-traitor. (*X-Men* #8)

ENERGIZE: He can charge objects with kinetic energy, causing them to explode. Gambit prefers playing cards, but he's also energized spikes, plates and cigarette lighters. (*Uncanny X-Men* #266, *Gambit* #3)

ORIGIN

Orphaned at an early age, Remy LeBeau first manifested his mutant abilities at puberty while being raised as a member of the Thieves Guild in New Orleans. Little Remy grew up and married Bella Donna Boudreaux of the Assassins Guild, in part to help forge a truce between their guilds. Unfortunately, their marriage (and the truce) didn't last. A loner by nature, Gambit has often been a mercenary, working for evil men such as Mr. Sinister. Although he later met up and joined the X-Men, trouble still tracks him down at every turn, and his past has cost him Rogue's love.

NOW APPEARING

You'll normally find the ragin' Cajun in the monthly pages of *X-Men* and *Uncanny X-Men*, but the li'l guy's getting his own series in December courtesy of writer Fabian Nicieza and penciler Steve Skroce. Besides exploring Gambit's powers a bit more, the creative team hopes to use the new title to define the hero's villains.

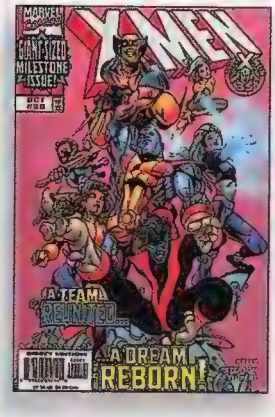
"We'll develop his rogue's gallery," Skroce reports, with Gambit's primary adversary being the Executioner. "Gambit's basically a thief, a criminal. But he's still a good guy just pretending to be bad. The Executioner is basically a bad guy pretending to be good. That's gonna be fun to explore."

REPORT card

COMIC BOOK REVIEWS

BY *WIZARD* EDITORS BRIAN CUNNINGHAM, ANDREW KARDON AND MIKE SEARLE

X-MEN
X-tinct plots



ISSUES REVIEWED: #75-#80
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: Marvel Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Joe Kelly, German Garcia, Brandon Peterson and Art Thibert
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $1.99/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Born with extraordinary abilities, the mutants Colossus, Kitty Pryde, Marrow, Nightcrawler, Rogue, Storm and Wolverine are the latest group of X-Men, a super-team dedicated to protecting the very same world which fears and hates it.

The Good: *X-Men*'s best trait is its solid characterization. Each member of the team—finally streamlined down to a manageable seven—has a distinct personality, whether it's the antagonistic Marrow, the gritty Wolverine or the happy-go-lucky Nightcrawler. Add them together and you've got a nice balance between tension and unity on the team. For example, Marrow might threaten to kill a teammate, but in the next scene, Nightcrawler and Wolverine will be old chums sharing a beer. There's enough conflict to drive the stories, yet you never lose that family feel that makes you want to be part of the X-Men stories.

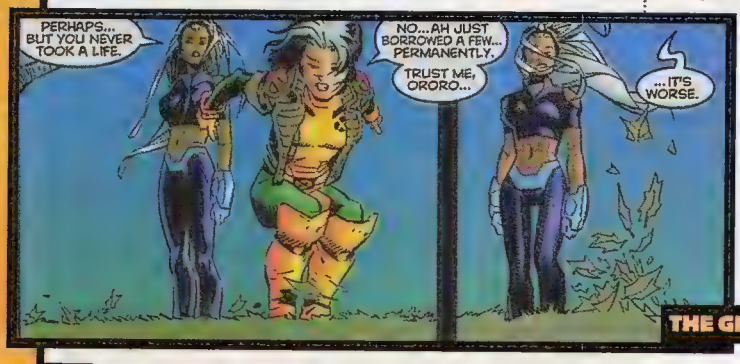
Stemming from this, every *X-Men* character has a distinct voice in the book due to its great dialogue. It can range from the clever to darn funny. For example, Wolverine says to Maggott in issue #76, "Ororo hates it when I smoke up here. An' I don't want t'risk a lightning bolt in the nether regions f'r nuthin'." Characters never lose their particular manner of speech, from Wolverine's tough-guy talk to Rogue's southern drawl to Marrow's bitter edge. They're all different.

The Bad: Except for the Shadow King storyline (#77-#78), there have been no surprises or twists in these boring plots. In issue #75, the X-Men fight the Ru'tai demons bent on ruling our dimension—a straightforward, senseless fight. Issue #76 reveals "The Tragic Origin of Maggott," which really didn't seem that tragic, but did seem mind-numbingly stupid—Magneto just happens to be flying across the desert and decides to take time out from his busy schedule of world domination to activate Maggott's digestion-based power? Give us a break.

As for the villains, with the exception of #80's "evil" X-Men team, there were hardly any down-to-earth supervillains. After battling demons in another dimension, a madman on the psionic plane and a disembodied computer intelligence, it's time for some good ol' fashioned slugfests with earthly villains like Magneto or the Blob. Heck, we'll even take Mesmero.

The Buzz: A new team featuring old favorites such as Colossus, Kitty Pride and Nightcrawler is attracting veteran fans back to take a look at the series. However, writer Joe Kelly is off the book as of issue #85 and Alan Davis (*JLA: The Nail*) has been tagged as a temporary replacement.

The Skinny: The X-Men are finally back as a team we want to read...they just need some exciting plotting and villains to go with them. ■

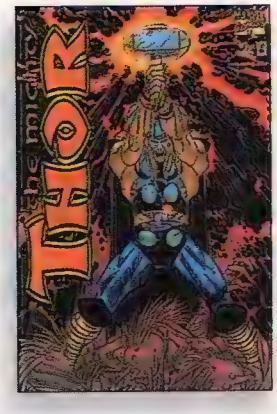


X-Men has too many demons and other-worldly beings. We wanna see baddies like Blob or the Hellfire Club.

Great dialogue makes these X-Men interesting.

THE GRADE: C+

THOR
Thunderous applause

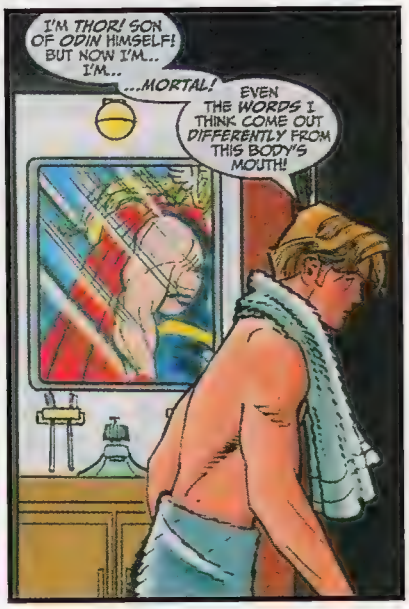


ISSUES REVIEWED: #1-#5
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: Marvel Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Dan Jurgens, John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $1.99/Monthly

What You Need to Know: After failing to save the life of paramedic Jake Olson, Thor (the Asgardian God of Thunder) is forced by the mysterious entity Marnot to serve penance by living the remainder of Olson's life. Now, Thor must share his time searching for his lost Asgardian comrades and fitting into a human's life—one that is very different from his own.

The Good: This is the most entertaining Thor we've read in the past 15 years. It looks epic and feels cosmic, something truly befitting the God of Thunder. The art is top-notch, continually delivering with the big money shots whether it's the arrival of the Destroyer (#1), a shackled and helpless Odin (#4) or even Thor soaring across the city skyline (#5). The art is some of the best of Romita Jr.'s career.

And the stories themselves are epic, too. Thor fights the unstoppable Destroyer, dies, goes to Hel, returns from the dead, fights a giant sea serpent, etc. But at the same time, thanks to his new alter-ego, human Jake Olson, Thor is forced to live as a god among men and learn about humanity from a human perspective.



The whole Jake Olson set-up is great because you feel for Thor as a character. Thor doesn't just have to deal with Jake's job, but his personal life too, including Jake's fiancée and her daughter. He's trying his best to live this human's life, but with no knowledge of Jake's past, Thor's completely lost. It's funny when Thor, as Jake, accidentally slips into Asgardian dialect when frustrated, which occurs frequently.

The book is also full of intriguing mysteries. Why does a demonic face pop out of Thor's mystical hammer? Why is Odin in chains? Who are those new god-like villains laying claim to a ruined Asgard? Where have the Asgardians disappeared to? Subplots like these will keep us coming back for more.

The Bad: The whole exchange between Marnot and Thor seems a little too convenient. Some all-new mysterious guy shows up and he's got the power to journey to Hel and push Thor around? It sounds a bit forced to us. Even worse, he follows Thor around like the Ghost of Christmas Past telling the Thunder God what he can and cannot do.

The Buzz: New Marvel relaunch. Avenger. Hot artist. Hot writer. Add it all up and you've got one hot tamale, which is just what *Thor* is.

The Skinny: As far as good *Thor* stories go, writer/artist Walt Simonson's run from the mid-1980s has long been considered the be-all and end-all...until now. With epic stories, phenomenal art and a human quality, this new *Thor* series has the potential to join Simonson's run as one of the greatest the God of Thunder's ever had. ■

Stuck in the mortal form of Jake Olson, Thor's private life has gotten a lot more interesting.

Thor is as appropriately massive as his stories are epic. Jurgens and Romita Jr. have so far captured the Thunder God perfectly.

THE GRADE: A

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES BOOKS

Cosmic confusion

ISSUES REVIEWED: *LOSH* #103-#108, *Legionnaires* #59-#65
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: DC Comics
CREATIVE TEAMS: Tom Peyer, Tom McCraw, Jason Armstrong, Ron Boyd, Drew Geraci (*LOSH*); Roger Stern, McCraw, Jeff Moy, W.C. Carani (*Legionnaires*)
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $2.50 each/Monthly

What You Need to Know: In the 30th century, the Legion is a large team of intergalactic teenage superheroes sanctioned by the United Planets, led by Invisible Kid and Saturn Girl.

The Good: The whole political conspiracy with the United Planets and the rival Affiliated Planets (from in the "Dark Circle Rising" story) sets the ground for some truly intriguing stories. It makes you wonder what'd happen to the world if the present-day U.N. had a competitor.

And it's kinda cool that *this* version of the future isn't all doom and gloom, but upbeat.

The Bad: The Legion books are clearly tailored for Legion fans, than new ones. For one, there's waaaay too many characters. Granted, a larger team cast has long been a Legion staple, but it's usually been handled in a way that you don't realize it. In these issues, it's chaotically noticeable. (*Legionnaires* #61 alone had three or four versions of each character!)

With too many characters, the stories are scattershot, cutting back and forth between multiple groupings each issue. Plus, the stories never slow down long enough for you to get to know these heroes or to see what certain characters' powers are; except for obvious name-to-power correlations like Invisible Kid, these issues did a poor job of conveying what superpowers heroes like Cosmic Boy or M'onel have. It also doesn't help that Legionnaires often call themselves by their odd first names (i.e., Rokk, Imra, Ayla, etc.) instead of codenames. In this regard, the "roll call" lists at the beginning of most issues are equally ineffective, especially since they don't directly match names with faces.

And in all the issues we read, it never really came right out and explained just what the Legion itself is, nor the United Planets for that matter.

Beyond all the confusion, these books are just super-hokey. Braniac 5 suddenly gets up-graded to...Braniac 5.1. Sensor is from a race of snake-like creatures, and she's got little mechanical arms. The mysterious villain behind the six-part "Dark Circle Rising" story is none other than Braniac's mom, a character alluded to in passing for a couple of panels in part 4 (plus, the secret was kinda blown on the cover to *LOSH* #108, part 6). Braniac's got a li'l white monkey pet who goes around saying "Koko." This stuff is just too goofy to swallow.

The Buzz: There's always been a strong cult following with the Legion. In fact, these fans'll probably wanna stick us in inertron blocks after reading this review.

The Skinny: Talk about disappointment. With a history of entertaining fans, we came into Legion expecting to read some fun, cosmic stories. Instead, we were faced with a zillion characters, little characterization and more hokiness than "Saved By the Bell." ■

The Legion *books have too many heroes. The 10 shown here are less than half the team!*

Uhh, do you REALLY wanna use that hokey name, Brainy? It's not that funny.

THE GRADE: D

WE HAVE ONE THING TO SAY TO THESE KIDS...

...THANKS!

WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO WOULD LIKE TO THANK THESE GUYS AND ALL THE REST OF THE FANS IN ATTENDANCE WHO MADE THIS YEAR'S SHOW SO MUCH FUN AND SUCH A SUCCESS.

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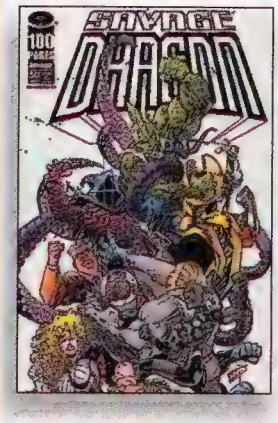
SAVAGE DRAGON

A wild ride



ISSUES REVIEWED: #47–#52
GENRE: Mature superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: Image Comics
CREATOR: Erik Larsen
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $2.50/Monthly

What You Need to Know: The Dragon's the leader of the S.O.S. (Special Operations Strikeforce), a superhero team which polices the world for supervillain threats. Super-strong, tough and able to regenerate almost any part of his body, no one, not even Dragon himself, knows how he got that way.

The Good: With *Savage Dragon*, anything goes. You never know what to expect with this book, and that's what makes it so entertaining. In issue #47, Dragon and his S.O.S. team embark on a routine mission to stop the tyrant Dread Knight from killing any more of his subjects...only to have teammate Dart's legs blown clean off (as well as discover that Dread Knight's dead and his armor's been acting on its own). In issue #50, Hitler's disembodied brain pulls a gun on Dragon and Cyberface, then blows up Cyberface's head, just like that. Even Dragon isn't safe—he apparently dies in issue #50 and with the next issue, the title of the series changes to *Savage She Dragon* to focus on Dragon's female counterpart.

All this mayhem will have you in stitches. When a 600-pound Brainiape crams himself into Overlord's old armor and bits and pieces of fur are puffing out all over the place, the situation is so ludicrous, you're on the floor (#49). Again that same issue, an Atlantean army swarms out of the ocean to conquer the surface world, but when the S.O.S. arrives to stop them...the Atlanteans are all bursting from explosive decompression.

Complementing all this is the quirky art. Detailed scenes, expressive faces, action-packed panels—all these facets of the artwork pull you right into the fun stories. When you also deliver a truly likable character like the Dragon, a tough guy with a heart of gold, you've got an irresistible package.

The Bad: Unfortunately, some characters aren't explained well enough. Issue #47 was confusing with older characters and events from Chicago popping back into the mix and never really clarified. Issue #50 had over two dozen different characters—that's just too many. It's too overwhelming for new readers. A quick recap at the beginning of the story (even a roll call on the credit page) would help a lot.

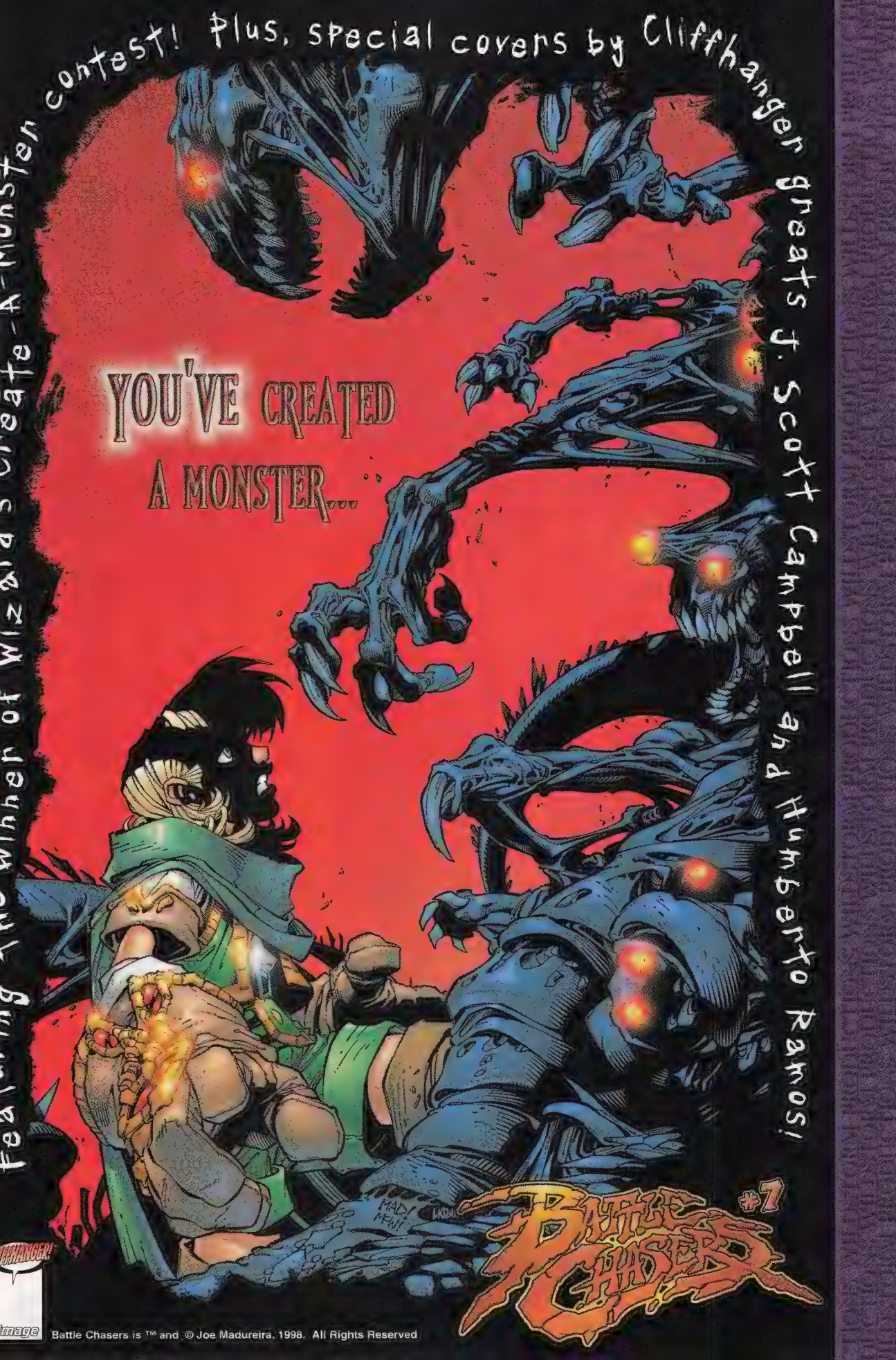
The Buzz: *Savage Dragon* already has a cult following of loyal fans. With Larsen now writing Marvel's *Wolverine* and DC's *Aquaman*, it's gonna attract even more attention.

The Skinny: We make it a point to place *Dragon* at the top of our reading list every month. Beyond the humor and outrageous shock value, we wanna see how Larsen will surprise us next. ■

Hitler's brain holding a gun? An armored, talking gorilla? This book is funny as hell.

Anything goes in Savage Dragon*—as Dart's legs can attest to.*

THE GRADE: A-



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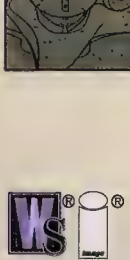
FEBRUARY 1999

IT'S A STRANGE WORLD. LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY.

PLANETARY™
number 1

WARREN ELLIS

JOHN CASSADAY



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THE X-MEN 35 ANNIVERSARY

MARVEL INTERACTIVE

WS

(N)EAT, MAN!

Japan's weirdest superhero, Eat-Man, takes a big bite out of crime

Hungry? Eat-Man is. He guzzles flame throwers and radios. And guns. *Really* big guns, complete with giant acid bullets.

He's Overeaters Anonymous' worst dream—a Japanese superhero with a bottomless stomach but who never gains a drop of weight. Despite his gluttony, Eat-Man is cool enough to inspire super-artist Jim Lee (*Divine Right: The Adventures of Max Faraday*) to draw the cover artwork for his second American graphic novel.

The world of Akihito Yoshitomi's *Eat-Man* is a place of wonder and a place of ruin—one part post-apocalypse wasteland and one part fantasy realm. There are gun-toting road warriors and dragons, magical swords and taxicabs. There also are explorers, a class of mercenaries and adventurers who roam the cities and lawless wastelands hiring themselves out to those in need of protection, guides or even capable troubleshooters.

Bolt Crank is not just an explorer, he's the *best* explorer around—and with good reason. Crank is the Eat-Man of the title; he has, as one rival puts it, "a unique constitution." He can consume inanimate objects—name it and he can digest it—and at the appropriate moment, his arm reforms into the weapon, whereupon he lays waste to every foul miscreant in sight.

Crank is the only regular character in the manga. He drifts from place to place, encountering new challenges, enemies and women to protect with each change of scenery. With his long trench coat, silent, confident mannerisms and long, flowing hair, he's the quintessential Japanese hero—the tough ronin of few words and a heart of gold. Or at least silver.

While maintaining his neutrality, Crank uses his skills to ensure everything comes out right in the end. In "Reluctant Guest" for example (*Eat-Man: Second Course* #4), old men hire him to guard a girl for one hour—so they can exploit her. Crank fulfills his duty to protect the girl from all enemies, including his employers, ensuring her protection until she can safely be returned to the arms of her lover, all the while maintaining a veneer of professional indifference.

HUNGRY HERO Bolt Crank enjoys nuts—but not of the typical variety.

All *Eat-Man* stories explore variations on a theme: Crank arrives in town, is hired to fulfill some task (such as guarding a royal treasure, protecting a city from marauders or rescuing a fair mermaid in captivity), eats like a horse at the trough as the plot unfolds, then—at the climax—pulls his exploding arm trick. There's often some twist to provide a little surprise at the end, and there is *always* a beautiful girl somewhere in the story, either as a client, temporary partner or rescue objective.

Though the stories aren't all that different, they're fun, ripping tales of adventure, and the art is fantastic. The illustrations are provocative and finely detailed, and the characters are tough bad-asses or cute girls. Yoshitomi likes his maidens in distress and he usually casts his female guest stars in that role.

BY PAUL SUDLOW

ANIMEPICK

ANIME FILM OF THE MONTH

Kiki's Delivery Service

(Buena Vista Home Entertainment, 104 minutes each, $19.99 dubbed VHS or $29.99 dubbed LD)

The animated "Kiki's Delivery Service" is a charming coming-of-age story about a young witch who sets out to find a town in need of her magical abilities. Accompanied by her black cat Jiji, she soon finds a niche in a bustling coastal town working for a bakery and delivering packages on her broom. But self-doubt and a heavy workload begin to fray Kiki's bubbly optimism, and she'll soon lose her powers if she can't discover who she really is.

Buena Vista Home Entertainment—a subsidiary of Disney—weds Hayao Miyazaki's incredible animation and character-driven story with top-notch voice acting—resulting in one of the best-realized anime projects ever produced in the West. Kirsten Dunst, Phil Hartman, Debbie Reynolds and Matthew Lawrence (among others) deliver spot-on performances, giving each of their characters a natural dimension that leaves the world of artificial "cartoon" acting behind.

"Kiki" is thoroughly entertaining, from the charming characters and top-notch voice acting to the breathtaking animation and catchy score. It even has a message if you dig deep enough: Miyazaki once admitted that "Kiki" represents Japan's quest for identity in the booming 1980s.

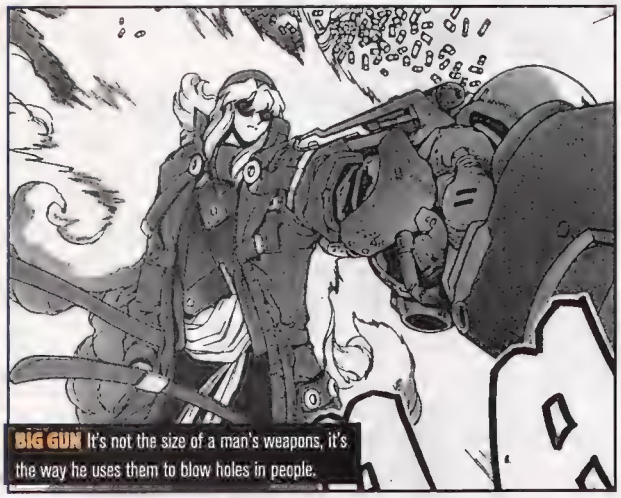
Buena Vista plans to release a subtitled version of "Kiki," but no release date has yet been set. The Mouse House is also thinking about releasing a DVD version, but hasn't made a commitment yet. ■

BROOM, NO GLOOM Kiki delivers goodies, not curses.

There's an interesting footnote to *Eat-Man* for fans of Image Comics. Lee is one of the first North American artists to do a cover for a manga series published in Japan. To be sure, there are those who have done manga covers for American manga editions—Frank Miller, Mobius and Adam Warren among them—but Lee crossed over into largely new territory when he agreed to create a cover for Yoshitomi's series.

According to Roman, Mediaworks—the publisher of both *Eat-Man* and the Japanese edition of *Gen¹³*—discovered that Yoshitomi was a fan of *Gen¹³* and asked Lee to do an *Eat-Man* cover. Lee agreed and, to return the favor, Yoshitomi did an as-yet-unpublished *Gen¹³* cover for Lee.

InQuest associate editor Paul Sudlow once dated Betty Crocker, but only for her snack treats.



BIG GUN It's not the size of a man's weapons, it's the way he uses them to blow holes in people.

F.Y.I.

INFO

Eat-Man was originally published in the United States in two volumes; there were six comics in the first volume and five in the second. The series is no longer being published by Viz, but the previously published works have been collected in two graphic novels. The *Eat-Man* graphic novel came out earlier this year, while *Eat-Man: Second Course* was released last month–and features the Jim Lee cover. Both books retail for $15.95 each.

Though Viz is no longer publishing *Eat-Man*, creator Akihito Yoshitomi continues to crank out new chapters in Japan and there are at least six Japanese graphic novels of material available. If sales of *Eat-Man: Second Course* are good, says Viz editor Annette Roman, Viz may resume publication of the series.

There is an *Eat-Man* anime running in Japan, but so far no American import company has shown an interest in bringing it stateside. Viz, which has canceled the manga, is not likely to be interested in bringing over the much more expensive anime series.

OOPS...

We've heard from a few *Fushigi Yûgi* fans out there regarding our spelling of both the book's title and the name of its heroine in *Wizard* #86. The ditzy protagonist is indeed named "Miaka" as several of you have pointed out, and not "Minaka," as was incorrectly reported.

Several other readers have noted that our spelling of *Fushigi Yûgi* is incorrect, and should be spelled with two "U"'s in "Yûgi." For stylistic reasons, Viz Comics (which produces *Fushigi Yûgi*'s American translation) has opted to spell "Yûgi" with only one "U" (and a carat to indicate an extension of the vowel sound). *Wizard* has opted to adopt the publisher's spelling.

MANGAPICKS

MUST READ JAPANESE COMICS SHIPPING IN NOVEMBER

Intron Depot 2: Blades

DARK HORSE

Intron Depot—published years ago—was a dream come true for Masamune Shirow fans: a full-color art book filled with sketches, beautiful paintings and never-before-seen manga scenes from a variety of Shirow projects ranging from 1981 to 1991. Well, time hasn't stood still for Shirow. *Intron Depot 2: Blades* follows its predecessor's footsteps, catching readers up on just what Shirow has been doing from 1992 through this summer, and featuring art never published in the West. Best of all, this coffee table book is in both Japanese *and* English, so you can actually read it! It's for mature audiences only. **$37.95**

Sailor Moon Pocket Manga #2

MIXX ENTERTAINMENT

Naoko Takeuchi's *Sailor Moon* recently broke its moorings in the anthology *Mixxzine* and went solo. Now the second *Sailor Moon* manga compilation has emerged. This graphic novel tells the story of Sailor Moon and all her sailor pals; it starts off where #1 left off and runs through to the beginning of the new *Sailor Moon* comic. **$11.95**

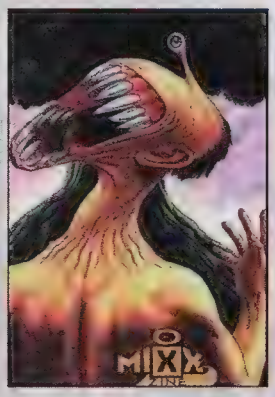
Lodoss War: The Grey Witch #1

CPM MANGA

Once upon a time, *Lodoss War* was a manga based on someone's Advanced Dungeons & Dragons campaign. Then it got animated and some publisher in Japan made a role-playing game out of it. Hmmm. Well, anyway, now you have a chance to check out the manga that started the whole ball rolling. The Grey Witch's evil is claiming Lodoss Island, and the four heroes Parn, Etoh, Ghim and Deedlit must unite to thwart her nasty plans. Ryo Mizuno and Akihiro Yamada are the creators of this high-fantasy saga done in that manga style you know and love. **$2.95**

Mixxzine Vol. 2 #2/3

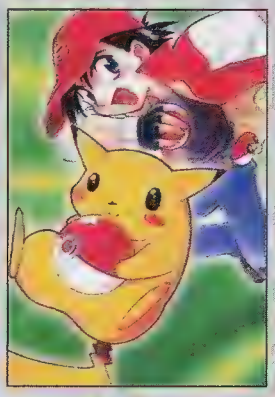
MIXX ENTERTAINMENT



Mixxzine has been fairly busy lately shuffling its manga titles around. *Harlem Beat* started up not long ago, and *Sailor Moon* has drifted off to its own comic title. Now a Gundam manga has arrived to fill the void created by Sailor Moon's departure. Say hello to *Mobile Suite Gundam Blue Destiny*. Even with the departure of *Sailor Moon*, *Mixxzine* remains a great value. Poor *Magic Knight Rayearth* is starting to look lonely as the only girls' comic in the mixx of bad boyz, though. **$4.99**

Pokémon: The Electric Tale of Pikachu #1

VIZ COMICS



He's cute, cuddly, huggable—and he's sent hundreds of Japanese kids to the hospital. He's Pikachu, the li'l Pokémon with an electric personality—and co-star of *Pokémon: The Electric Tale of Pikachu* by Toshihiro Ono. You can get the whole lowdown on that hospital episode elsewhere in this issue, but this is the place for the manga scoop. All young Ash Ketchum wants is to be a Pokémon trainer, and now that he's turned 10, he's old enough to get a Pokémon of his very own. Which he does, when he discovers Pikachu chewing the wiring in his house. Now all he has to do is find 149 more. *Pokémon* is a great comic for the kids in your life and for the young at heart. **$3.25**

Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind Boxed Set

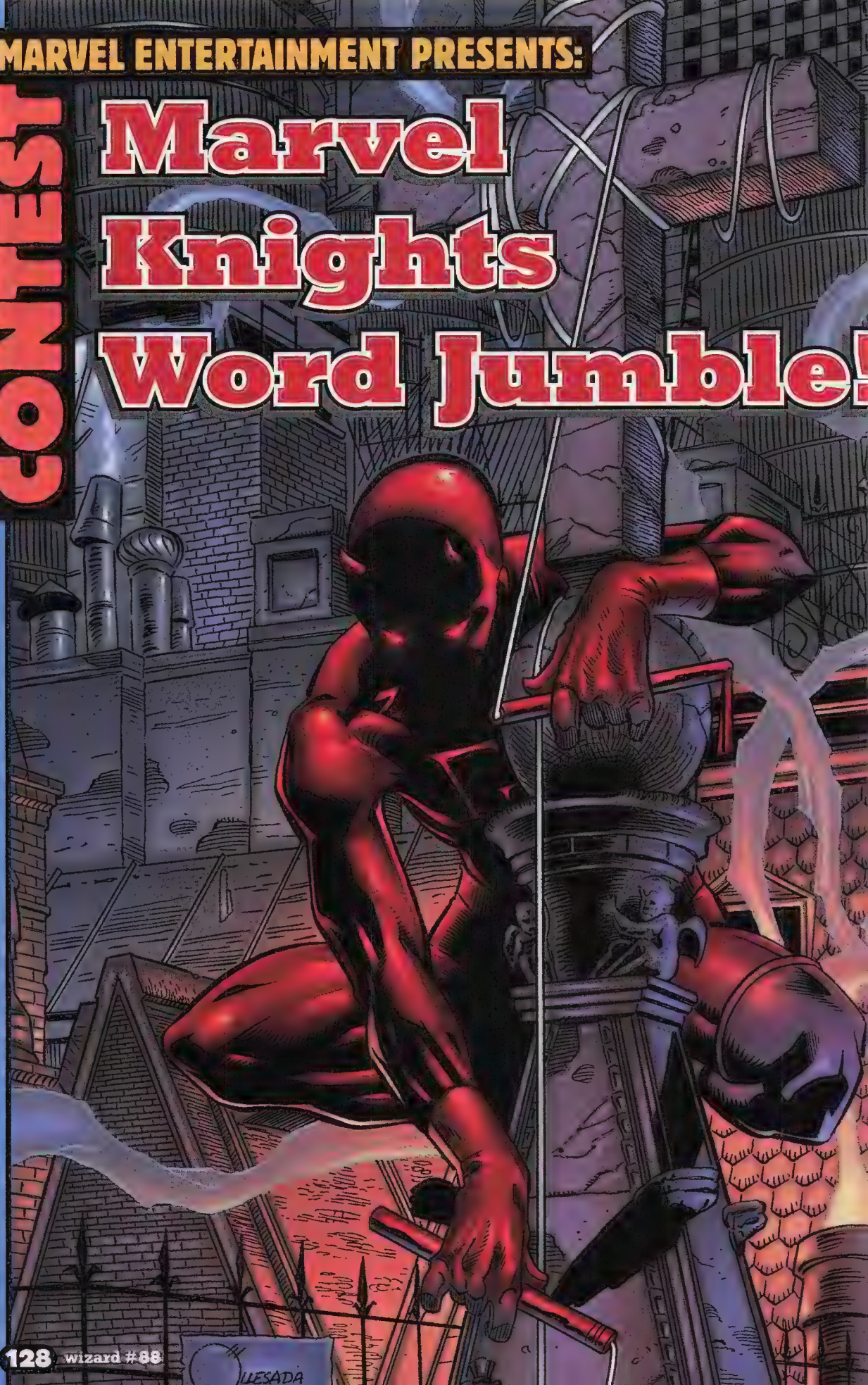
VIZ COMICS

Hayao Miyazaki is the man. Not only does he produce great family entertainment such as "Kiki's Delivery Service," he also crafts some fairly serious works which communicate his own thoughts about man and his place in the universe. Being Miyazaki, he also makes them highly entertaining. His manga *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind* finished its very long run some time ago, but this is the first time Viz has put the entire saga into one attractive package. If you've ever thought about picking up this amazing title, this is your wake-up call. **$69.95** ■

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS:

CONTEST

Marvel Knights Word Jumble!



PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): One knight in shining armor wins a cool, red Daredevil prototype statue from Bowen Designs signed by Joe Quesada, Jimmy Palmiotti, Kevin Smith and Randy Bowen, an original page of *Daredevil* art by Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti, the first issue of the four Marvel Knights titles: *Daredevil*, *Punisher*, *Black Panther* and the *Inhumans* signed by the creators, a copy of the *Marvel Knights Tourbook* and a Marvel Knights T-shirt.

FIRST PRIZE (5): Five hellcats each win a Marvel Knights T-shirt, a Marvel Knights poster, plus the first issue of the four Marvel Knights titles: *Daredevil*, *Punisher*, *Black Panther* and the *Inhumans* signed by the creators.

SECOND PRIZE (10): Ten Inhumans each capture a Marvel Knights T-shirt and poster!

HERE'S WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO TO SLINK AWAY WITH THOSE PEACHY-KEEN PRIZES. Using the words "Marvel Knights," make as many words, three letters or more, as you can and send us the list. The words don't have to be comic related, they just need to be in English. Here's one to get you started: "are." See how simple that is? If we get more than one entrant with the highest total amount of words, we'll choose one at random to be the winner. Get going!

MARVEL® COMICS

THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY THE DARING AND DEVILISH FOLKS AT GOOD OL' MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT!

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out and put it in an envelope. Send to:
"Marvel Knights Word Jumble!,"
c/o Wizard Entertainment,
P.O. Box 118,
Congers, NY 10920-0118

MATT MURDOCK'S LAW

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Marvel Entertainment, their immediate families and anyone who hasn't seen "Chasing Amy." Come on, it's a comic book movie for heaven's sake! Go rent it! Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, e-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Marvel Knights World Jumble!" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries and all rights relating thereto become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by December 30, 1998.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be selected by random drawing by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than February 3, 1999. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti may ride to your house, steal your dog and another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about January 13, 1999.

For a list of winners, available after January 13, 1998 send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Marvel Knights World Jumble!" Contest Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

"Marvel Knights Word Jumble!" Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE December 30, 1998!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

E-mail Address _____

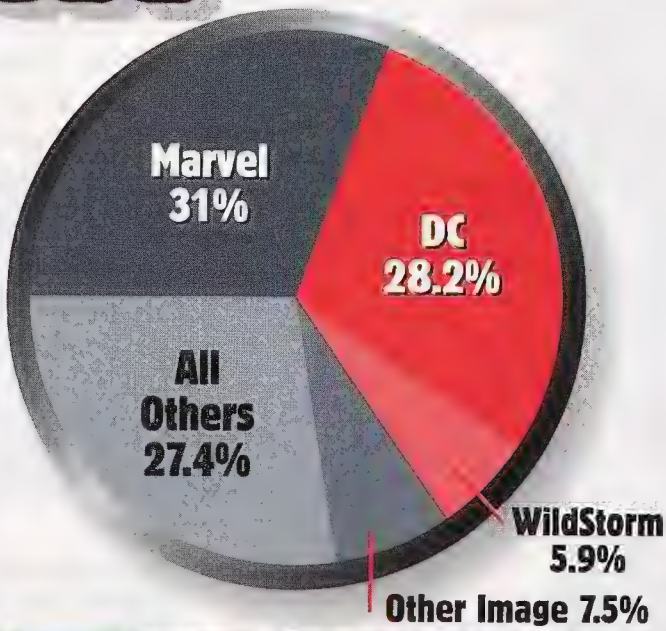
DID YOU REMEMBER TO ATTACH YOUR ENTRY?

COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH by Lars Pearson

MARKET WATCH

NEW MARVEL #1s ARE NO. 1

New Marvel babies making lots of noise



GOBBLING UP DC's acquisition of WildStorm gives them a bigger piece of the pie. Mmmm. Pie. (Source: Diamond Comic Distributors units market share, September 1998)

Marvel Comics is using "#1" to remain No. 1. Though worshippers of continuity might get twisted-bowel syndrome, Marvel Comics' restarts of old and dear titles with #1 issues have not only turbo-charged primary sales, but perked up the back-issue market, too. These days, comic book orders are lower than they've been in years. With fewer copies available, surprise hits are a greater possibility. Consider the following:

• **Daredevil #1**—Fans just *looove* "Clerks" movie writer/director Kevin Smith and the art team of Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti (*Ash*). *Daredevil* #1 was a near sellout on its *first day* of release, and that includes 10,000 copies Marvel overprinted, anticipating higher demand. Smith is on *DD* for six issues, and Quesada and Palmiotti will be there for at least 12. That gives *Daredevil* #1 a year (or better) of rock-solid popularity to grow in value—better lasso one while you can.

• **Mutant X #1**—There was little controversy about this #1 since its predecessor, *X-Factor*, had done so many creative about-faces, few could make heads or tails of it. Now, many new fans are digging stories of X-Factor leader Havok trapped in a parallel Earth with whacked-out versions of the X-Men. This highly ordered book is already selling above cover price.

• **Spider-Girl #1**—Spider-Girl is hip, cute and easily the most popular character in Marvel's new "MC2" line. Her #1 issue already moves for about $1 more than cover. But be warned that history dictates that *Spider-Girl*'s success is linked to the entire MC2 line—when Marvel's "2099" line folded in 1996, it killed prosperous books like *X-Men 2099* and *X-Nation 2099* that couldn't survive alone.

Speaking of new Marvels, you might want to check out *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 (November) and soon-to-be *The Hulk* #1 (February 1999), which will leave *Uncanny X-Men* (just hitting #362) as the only Marvel title continuing numbering from the Silver Age. For those of you wondering, Marvel editor-in-chief Bob Harras doubts *Uncanny* will be renumbered. "We may be tweaking some of the other titles in the X-line, 'mutating' them, if you will," Harras said. "The plan in new titles is to create more things like *Spider-Girl*—something that's

WE'RE NUMBER ONE! New starts have been big winners for Marvel.

brand-spankin' new, but with a name that still has reader recognition."

DC (WILD)STORMS AHEAD

Wizard broke the news last month: Effective Jan. 1, 1999, DC owns Jim Lee's WildStorm Productions. So what's the market effect?

Well, if September (the most recent month with full numbers available; see graph) is any indication, DC should easily become the comic industry's No. 1 publisher. Marvel nabbed 31 percent of all books sold to DC's 28.2 percent. But WildStorm's 5.9 percent added to the DC total for September would trump Marvel and give DC a decided edge.

And that's no small potatoes. The prestige of being No. 1 is big, and for many moons Marvel has had the distinction of being the leader. If and when DC takes the top slot, getting licensing and movie deals will becomes that much easier for DC—and that much tougher for Marvel. If nothing else, with Marvel canceling and launching new titles to keep up, we'll all have a fun race to watch.

FATHOM SPLASHES

It was a tidal wave—but not the one speculators wanted.

Michael Turner's *Fathom*, the new book from Top Cow, is one of the most popular comics on the market. However, the fast-and-furious *Fathom* trading going on doesn't guarantee a price increase.

Though mega-popular, *Fathom* cannot overcome the forces of supply and demand. As with another Top Cow topseller, *The Darkness* #11, *Fathom* was well-anticipated and well-stocked. The book's initial orders were in the range of 275,000 copies and, even allowing for the issue's three-cover split, nobody who wanted a *Fathom* #1 was denied. It's selling well, but for $3-4 at the most.

Currently—and please excuse the plug—the only breakout is the *Fathom* #1 variant exclusive to the Wizard World Chicago '98 convention. It's going for about $30 across the nation, as supplies of this book based on Turner's water-based heroine have (*ahem*) dried up.

BITS O' VARIANT BUSINESS

We know you're out there—completists who nab every single variant. Don't worry, we all love you, and here are some easily missed items currently seeing some big-time action:

• **Danger Girl #1 (Danger-Sized Edition)**—As the title implies, this was

PHOTOS: BUSIEK, KELLY, SMITH, MARZ, DAVID, ADAM KUBERT, LEE, MADUREIRA, ROSS, TURNER, WAID, ROMITA, JR. AND BACHALO BY PAUL SCHIBALDI; MORRISSON BY BOB MARTIN, ANDY KUBERT BY C. BLANKENHORN; PÉREZ BY BOB SMITH; SEAGLE COURTESY OF STEVE SEAGLE; JURGENS BY JACKO MANCHES; CAMPBELL BY MOONDOGH

TOP 10 CREATORS

FAN FAVORITES

These are the creators the fans crave. Creators whose name on a cover sells the book. *Wizard's* Top Ten Creators lists are derived from a nationwide retailer survey. Artists include pencilers and painters.

WRITERS

1. Kurt Busiek
Astro City, Avengers

2. Mark Waid
Captain America, Flash

3. Garth Ennis
Preacher, Hitman

4. Kevin Smith
Clerks, Daredevil

5. Joe Kelly
Deadpool, X-Men

6. Grant Morrison
JLA, Invisibles

7. Steven T. Seagle
Uncanny X-Men, Alpha Flight

8. Dan Jurgens
Thor, Superman

9. Ron Marz
Green Lantern

10. Peter David
Supergirl, Young Justice

ARTISTS

1. Joe Madureira
Battle Chasers

2. Michael Turner
Fathom

3. J. Scott Campbell
Danger Girl

4. Alex Ross
Superman: PoE

5. Jim Lee
Divine Right

6. George Pérez
Avengers

7. Andy Kubert
Captain America

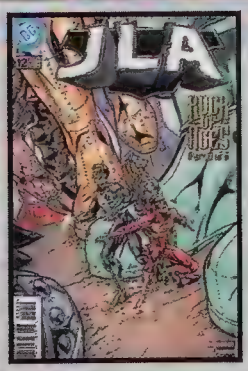
8. Adam Kubert
X-Men

9. John Romita Jr.
Thor, P.P.: Spider-Man

10. Chris Bachalo
Uncanny X-Men

BURIED TREASURE

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THIS



JLA #12

He's the man of the hour, the man with the power, and he's here *first*.

As part of a time-travel story, *JLA* #12 debuted a futuristic robot who just happens to be the newest incarnation of a classic DC hero called Hourman. "Big whoop," you say? Well, Hourman also made an appearance in the recent *DC One Million* crossover, and most importantly, he's due to receive his own ongoing series. That's the sort of thing that, if well-received, always bumps a character's first appearance. And since *JLA* #12 is still going for about three bucks, you'd better get one before the future becomes expensive. ■ LP

a big honkin' (10-by-15 inches) version of *Danger Girl* #1. It was offered as a retailer incentive, with stores having to order 25 regular *Danger Girl* #1s to get one. With attention focused on the ultra-rare *Danger Girl* #1 Chromium, many overlooked the Danger-Sized Edition, which now nets $50 on the back-issue market.

• **A Distant Soil #25 (signed variant cover)**—Surprise! *A Distant Soil* #25 featured a variant cover painted by creator Colleen Doran, limited to a mere 450 copies. And *all* of 'em were signed and numbered by Doran and Neil Gaiman (*Sandman*), whose "Troll Bridge" backup story appears in the issue. This super-rare autographed book already sells for $35 to $40.

THREE BEST SELLERS I'm telling you, it's all that pretty long hair that does it!

• **Jay & Silent Bob #1 (variant photo covers)**—As a San Diego Comic Con promotion, Oni Press printed *Jay and Silent Bob* #1 with two exclusive photo covers: 1,000 copies each of Jay kissing a Silent Bob toy, and Bob holding a Jay toy. What's got fans crying "Snootchie bootchies!" is that these puppies were only available as a set, with two variant Jay and Silent Bob toys included. The set of four items sold for $60 in San Diego, but sparked up to $125 on the post-convention market.

Wizard Price Guide manager Lars Pearson is an unsigned and unnumbered edition of one. He currently sells for $1.98 a pound.

RETAILER NETWORK & V.I.P.s

RELIABLE SOURCES

Bruno Andreacchi
B.A.'s Comics & Nostalgia
121 Oxford St. East London
Ontario, Canada N6A 1T4
(519) 439-9636

Chris Barchuk
Wizard World
Rockland Center
51 E. Rt. 59
Nanuet, NY 10954
(914) 624-2224

Dave Braunstein
Eldorado Comics
2110 E. Rt. 70
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
(609) 489-1199

Rich Conley
Heroes & Fantasies
914 Pat Brooker Road
Universal City, TX 78148
(210) 945-9884

D. Roberts & J. Walker
Legends Comics
Kentucky Oaks Mall
5101 Hinkleville Rd.
Paducah, KY 42001
(612) 822-2806

Dash Hobbeheydar &
Mark Laskowski
And Then it Rained Comics
P.O. Box 11041
Scottsdale, AZ 85271
(602) 990-8224

Steve Huber
Galaxy Comics
10 North 36th Street
Richmond, IN 47374
(765) 962-8239

Brian Kozicki & John Cathell
Buried Under Comics
188 West Middle Turnpike
Manchester, CT 06040
(860) 643-7295

Ivan Matos
Comic Connection
2128-C Fort Campbell Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37042
(615) 572-9588

Ron McClure
American Comics and Cards
6787 Lee Highway
Chattanooga, TN 37421
(423) 490-0501

Avrom Oliver
Adventures in Comics & Games
6026 Fair Oaks Blvd.
Carmichael, CA 95608
(916) 973-9064

Jerry Ringi
Amazing Fantasy
4300 Portsmouth Blvd.
Suite 192
Chesapeake, VA 23321
(757) 465-8390

Tom Shea
TJ Collectibles
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Milford, MA 01757
(508) 473-5874

Steve Snyder
Central City Comics
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Columbus, OH 43220
(614) 459-5045

Joel Thingvall
Nostalgia Zone
3149 1/2 Hennepin Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55406
(612) 822-2806

Doug Miers
Comics Conspiracy
115 A. East Fremont Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94087
(408) 245-6275

Stuart Wagner
Caveman
1344 E. Battlefield
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 882-2283

Robert Scott
Comickaze Comics
& Sportscards
5615 Balboa Ave.
San Diego, CA 92111
(619) 278-0371

Nolan Wyatt
Golden Apple Comics
7711 Melrose
Los Angeles, CA 90046
(213) 658-6047

Todd McDevitt
New Dimension Comics
Units 20-21
20550 Rte. 19
Cranberry Township, PA
16066-7520
(412) 776-0433

Phil Davis
B & D Comic Shop
802 Elm St. South West
Roanoke, VA 24016
(703) 342-6642

Damon McCulloch
Comics & Comix
6135 Sunrise Blvd.
Citrus Heights, CA 95610
(916) 969-0717

Robert Letscher II
Key Comics
PO Box 3855
Scottsdale, AZ 85271-3855
(602) 949-8499

John Chruschinski &
Bruce Ellsworth
Tropic Comics
313 S. State Rd. #7
Plantation, FL 33317

James Elkins
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21280 Ft. Campbell Blvd.
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(615) 572-9588

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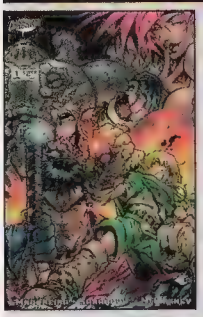
TOP 10 comics

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. These are the books ringing the registers this month...**

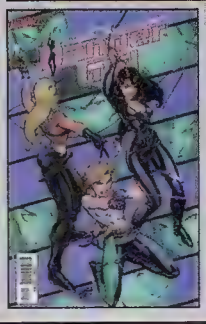
1 BATTLE CHASERS #1



WRITERS: Joe Madureira & Munier Sharrieff
ARTISTS: Joe Madureira & Tom McWeeney

It's good to be Joe Madureira these days. Seems he's got everything: A smash hit comic, a new house, a dog named Simba and an excuse to draw Red Monika and her twin beach balls every month. Yep, ever since *Battle Chasers* hit and fans started gobbling it up, everything's been sunshine, lollipops and merry-go-rounds for Joe Mad. He has everything a guy could possibly want, except a last name that's easy to spell. **LAST MONTH:** 1

2 DANGER GIRL #1



WRITERS: J. Scott Campbell & Andy Hartnell
ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell & Alex Garner

It's good to be J. Scott Campbell these days, too. Campbell also has a monster hit on his hands in *Danger Girl*, which actually features four chicks and should be called *Danger Girls*. But truth-in-labeling concerns aside, geeks seem to beat a path to *DG* for both the wacky, fun, crazy, campy, spy-thrill hijinks...and multiple babes in tight, skimpy outfits. And that's a combination better than peanut butter and jelly, friend. **LAST MONTH:** 3

3 DARKMINDS #1

WRITERS: Pat Lee & Adrian Tsang
ARTISTS: Pat Lee, Alvin Lee & Alan Tam

So we're minding our business one day when–WHAM!–*Darkminds* #1 comes outta nowhere and smacks us upside the head. And it has a $10 price tag, like, a week after it hits. Just goes ta show ya: The manga audience is there, they gots money ta burn, and they'll turn Japanese for this title. **LAST MONTH:** 2

4 UNCANNY X-MEN #350

WRITER: Steven T. Seagle
ARTISTS: J. Madureira, A. Smith, T. Townsend, V. Russell and D. Panosian

Gah! It's glint-glint shiny! And it's so rare, you'd sell your mom to get one. Okay, so maybe you'd sell your mom anyway for the right price, but *Uncanny* #350's "Trial of Gambit" is still a back-issue scorcher a year after release. **LAST MONTH:** 4

5 WITCHBLADE #25 (HOLOFOIL ALTERNATE)

WRITERS: Christina Z. and David Wohl
ARTISTS: Michael Turner and D-Tron

It's like this: If ya ordered a kajillion *Fathom* #1s and half-a-kajillion *Witchblade* #25s, ya got one super-limited Holofoil. And since your average *Witchblade* reader is a fanatic completist and people like shiny things, this book is big. **LAST MONTH: NOT RANKED (N.R.)**

6 SPIDER-GIRL #1

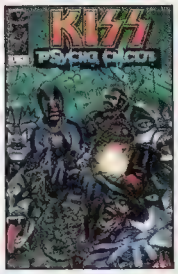
WRITER: Tom DeFalco
ARTISTS: Pat Oliffe and Al Williamson

So Peter and Mary Jane Parker had a "What If...?" daughter. They named her "May," 'natch. And ya know what? People have showed up for the new kid on the block, big time. *Spider-Girl* is the First Lady of Marvel's new MC2 line and #1 sold out lickety-split. You go, girl! **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

7 MUTANT X #1

WRITER: Howard Mackie
ARTISTS: Tom Raney and Andrew Pepoy

Want the recipie for a hit comic? Mix an X-Men character (such as, say, Havok) with an alternate-reality "Age of Apocalypse" vibe. Add a dash of great art and a cool story. Bake at 425° for 30 minutes. Frost it with a "#1" on top. *¡Voila!* You've got *Mutant X* #1, an instant hit! **LAST MONTH: N.R.**



8 KISS: THE PSYCHO CIRCUS #1

WRITER: Brian Holguin
ARTISTS: Angel Medina & Kevin Conrad

Know who's kickin' himself in the tail right now? Vinnie Vincent. He played guitar with KISS for *one album*, then went power-trip and tried to take over. The band showed him the door. Head first. Now KISS is a nationwide comic sensation and Todd McFarlane's little buddies. See ya, Vinnie. **LAST MONTH:** 9

9 NIGHTWING #1

WRITER: Chuck Dixon
ARTISTS: Scott McDaniel and Karl Story

Titles such as *Darkminds* or *Mutant X* hit fast and hard. But *Nightwing* took the opposite path: slow and steady. New readers are turning on to *Nightwing* every month. When they do, where do they wanna start? Try #1, Einstein. See? This "Top 10 Comics" thing ain't so tough to figure. **LAST MONTH:** 5

10 DAREDEVIL #1

WRITER: Kevin Smith
ARTISTS: Joe Quesada & Jimmy Palmiotti

Hi. Welcome to the obligatory Kevin Smith part of our countdown. Every month, something by the "Chasing Amy" director/screenwriter seems to hit here. This month's flavor? *Daredevil*. And if you thought the *Clerks* comic was big, you're right. But Smith on superheroes? Gonna be huge, baby. **LAST MONTH: N.R.**

THE HIGHEST-ORDERED BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF **SEPTEMBER**

TOP100

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors.

Soon-to-be *Gambit* artist Steve Skroce handled the return of Gambit in *Uncanny X-Men* 361.

1. Uncanny X-Men #361 (Marvel)
2. X-Men #81 (Marvel)
3. Danger Girl #5 (Cliffhanger/Image)
4. Spawn #78 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
5. Battle Chasers #5 (Cliffhanger/Image)
6. Avengers #10 (Marvel)
7. Wolverine #131 (Marvel)
8. Wolverine #130 (Marvel)
9. JLA #1,000,000 (DC)
10. Daredevil #1 (Marvel)
11. Fantastic Four #11 (Marvel)
12. DC One Million #1 (DC)
13. Captain America #11 (Marvel)
14. DC One Million #2 (DC)
15. DC One Million #3 (DC)
16. Mutant X #2 (Marvel)
17. DC One Million #4 (DC)
18. Iron Man #10 (Marvel)
19. Thor #5 (Marvel)
20. Witchblade #26 (Top Cow/Image)
21. Amazing Spider-Man #441 (Marvel)
22. Darkness #18 (Top Cow/Image)
23. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #98 (Marvel)
24. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #97 (Marvel)
25. Crimson #5 (Cliffhanger/Image)
26. Spectacular Spider-Man #263 (Marvel)
27. Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty #3 (Marvel)
28. Buffy the Vampire Slayer #1 (Dark Horse)
29. X-Men: Liberators #1 (Marvel)
30. JLA: Year One #11 (DC)
31. Green Lantern #1,000,000 (DC)
32. Curse of the Spawn #25 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
33. Generation X #44 (Marvel)
34. Spider-Girl #2 (Marvel)
35. Superman #1,000,000 (DC)
36. Punisher #1 (Marvel)
37. Action Comics #1,000,000 (DC)
38. Sensational Spider-Man #33 (Marvel)
39. X-Force #83 (Marvel)
40. Black Panther #1 (Marvel)
41. Inhumans #1 (Marvel)
42. Superman: The Man of Steel #1,000,000 (DC)
43. Adventures of Superman #1,000,000 (DC)
44. Divine Right: T.A.O.M.F. #7 (WildStorm/Image)
45. Batman #1,000,000 (DC)
46. Incredible Hulk #470 (Marvel)
47. Superman: The Man of Tomorrow #1,000,000 (DC)
48. X-Man #44 (Marvel)
49. Detective Comics #1,000,000 (DC)
50. Nightwing #1,000,000 (DC)
51. Young Justice #1,000,000 (DC)
52. Cable #60 (Marvel)
53. Cable #61 (Marvel)
54. Ascension #10 (Top Cow/Image)
55. JLA In Crisis Secret Files #1 (DC)
56. Flash #1,000,000 (DC)
57. A-Next #2 (Marvel)
58. KISS: The Psycho Circus #13 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
59. 300 #5 (Dark Horse)
60. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #1,000,000 (DC)
61. Gen^{13} #33 (WildStorm/Image)
62. Thunderbolts #20 (Marvel)
63. J2 #2 (Marvel)
64. Robin #1,000,000 (DC)
65. Superman For All Seasons #3 (DC)
66. Superman: Doomsday Wars #1 (DC)
67. Catwoman #1,000,000 (DC)
68. Preacher #43 (Vertigo/DC)
69. Supergirl #1,000,000 (DC)
70. Wonder Woman #1,000,000 (DC)
71. Martian Manhunter #1,000,000 (DC)
72. Deadpool #22 (Marvel)
73. Rampaging Hulk #4 (Marvel)
74. Starman #1,000,000 (DC)
75. Stone #2 (Avalon/Image)
76. Alpha Flight #16 (Marvel)
77. Elseworlds' Finest: Supergirl and Batgirl (DC)
78. The Tenth #13 (Image)
79. Jay and Silent Bob #4 (Oni Press)
80. Green Arrow #1,000,000 (DC)
81. Legends of the DC Universe #10 (DC)
82. Aquaman #1,000,000 (DC)
83. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #112 (DC)
84. Darkminds #3 (Image)
85. X-Files #41 (Topps)
86. Spider-Man Unlimited #22 (Marvel)
87. Purgatori #1 (Chaos!)
88. Azrael #1,000,000 (DC)
89. Superman: The Dark Side #2 (DC)
90. Superboy #1,000,000 (DC)
91. Hitman #1,000,000 (DC)
92. Pitt #19 (Full Bleed Studios)
93. Lady Death #9 (Chaos!)
94. Legion of Super-Heroes #1,000,000 (DC)
95. What If...? #114 (Marvel)
96. Legionnaires #1,000,000 (DC)
97. Star Wars: Mara Jade—By the Emperor's Hand #2 (D.H.)
98. Marvel Annual '98: Alpha Flight and Inhumans (Marvel)
99. Batman/Toyman #1 (DC)
100. Painkiller Jane/Darkchylde #1 (Event)

TOP 100 HIGHLIGHTS

KNIGHTS WIN THE JOUST

Daredevil #1, Punisher #1, Black Panther #1, Inhumans #1 (Nos. 10, 36, 40, 41)

Spearheading the charge of the "Marvel Knights" line, *Daredevil* #1 raced to No. 10, boasting the talents of writer Kevin Smith (*Clerks*) and artists Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti (*Ash*). Marvel actually overprinted the book by 10,000 copies to fill what the company thought would be an even greater demand. They guessed right. The extra copies disappeared faster than the Invisible Woman. And while *Daredevil*'s Smith-fueled name recognition pushed it far above the other "Knights" books, *Punisher* also got a slight nose-up for having character recognition in addition to famed horror artist Bernie Wrightson.

DC One Million (Nos. 12, 14, 15, 17 and all them #1,000,000s)

The future is now! Notice how most DC books rose five to 10 places this month because of the "One Million" crossover? The stunt scored and scored big for DC, adding 15 to 20 percent to Superman and Batman sales. And for lower-tier books such as *Starman*, *Azrael* and *Superboy*, the gain was in the 30 to 40 percent neighborhood. "One Million" was worth a million to DC.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer #1 (No. 28)

Good grief! When was the last time a Dark Horse book ranked this high? Buffy outpaced even perennial Dark Horse creative favorite Frank Miller (*300*) and staked (Ouch!) her claim to No. 28. Sure, the nifty debut was driven by the popularity of the TV show and its hot star, Sarah Michelle Gellar. But strong marketing and a cover by fan-favorite artist Arthur Adams (*Monkeyman and O'Brien*) surely didn't hurt matters either.

Incredible Hulk #470 (No. 46)

Once Peter David, the *Incredible Hulk* writer of 12 (!) years, left this book, fans started leaving, too. Ol' Greenskin used to hang out around the No. 20 mark, but the Hulkster plunged to No. 46 for this month. New writer Joe Casey (*Cable*) has some fan buzz behind him, but sales are still slipping from the David era. We'll see what happens after Marvel cancels *Incredible Hulk* after #474 and relaunches just-plain *The Hulk* with a new #1 in February 1999.

Darkminds #3 (No. 84)

Last month's *Darkminds* #2 took a plunge, dipping all the way down to No. 120. But crazed buying of *Darkminds* #1 on the back-issue market rebounded this title back to No. 84 for issue #3. With that massively strong back-issue following, it's a pretty good bet you can look for *Darkminds* to become a "Top 100" chart feature for its entire planned eight-issue mini-series run.

CLOSE-UP LOOK

Break it on down now! Here's a look at the top-selling books in a couple of categories, with their overall Diamond Comic Distributors "Top 300" rankings in parentheses.

BITE THIS! *Crimson* leads the cool crew as the top-selling teen-character book of the month.

TOP TEEN BOOKS

1. Crimson #5 (Cliffhanger/Image, No. 25)
2. Buffy the Vampire Slayer #1 (Dark Horse, No. 28)
3. Generation X #44 (Marvel, No. 33)
4. Spider-Girl #2 (Marvel, No. 34)
5. Divine Right: T.A.O.M.F. #7 (WildStorm/Image, No. 44)
6. Young Justice #1,000,000 (DC, No. 51)
7. A-Next #2 (Marvel, No. 57)
8. Gen^{13} #33 (WildStorm/Image, No. 61)
9. J2 #2 (Marvel, No. 63)
10. Robin #1,000,000 (DC, No. 64)

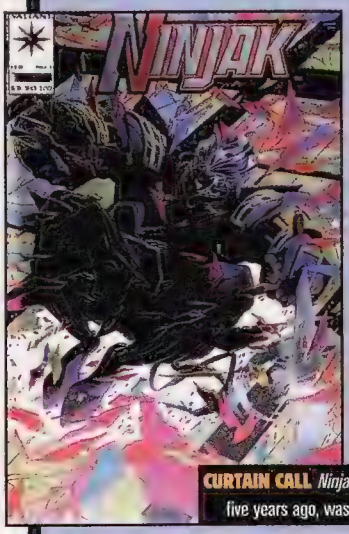
TOP BOOKS BY PUBLISHER

1. Marvel: Uncanny X-Men #361 (No. 1)
2. Image: Danger Girl #5 (No. 3)
3. DC: JLA #1,000,000 (No. 9)
4. Dark Horse: Buffy the Vampire Slayer #1 (No. 28)
5. Oni: Jay and Silent Bob #4 (No. 79)
6. Topps: X-Files #41 (No. 85)
7. Chaos!: Purgatori #1 (No. 87)
8. Full Bleed: Pitt #19 (No. 92)
9. Event: Painkiller Jane/Darkchylde #1 (No. 100)
10. Harris: Vampirella: Hell on Earth #1 (No. 120)

LOOKING BACK

What topped the charts FIVE YEARS AGO?

1. Uncanny X-Men #308 (Marvel)
2. Spawn #18 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
3. X-Men #28 (Marvel)
4. Ninjak #1 (Valiant)
5. Action Comics #695 (DC)
6. WildC.A.T.s #6 (WildStorm/Image)
7. X-Men 2099 #4 (Marvel)
8. CyberForce #2 (Top Cow/Image)
9. Batman #503 (DC)
10. Superman #85 (DC)



CURTAIN CALL *Ninjak* #1, the No. 4 book five years ago, was Valiant's last big hit.

Welcome to Valiant Comics' last gasp of glory: The James Bond-esque *Ninjak* #1, featuring ninja-trained Colin King. This issue had the obligatory Chromium cover and the famed art talent of Joe Quesada (*Daredevil*). But Valiant's popularity–little did the company know–was set to dive. Quesada left *Ninjak* after only three issues; the title folded after #28. Today, *Ninjak* #1 is the stuff of which shiny quarter-bins are made.

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C.B.I.Q.

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART...

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

What's shakin', bacon? Who's ready for a big ol' test of comics knowledge, scientifically graded against a topical scale? It's been canceled for a few years now, so perhaps it's time to stop bitching about it. Nah. "Full House" caused us an undue amount of pain over the years, so this month we're ranking your score against the actors who pained us the most and the way we'd like to hurt them back.

SCORE	RANK
0-4	*Dave Coulier (Joey Gladstone). A good flossing with razor wire.*
5-9	*John Stamos (Jesse Katsopolous). Cement slippers and a septic tank.*
10-14	*The Olsen twins (Michelle Tanner). Graphic violence against children is no laughing matter. So a simple gassing.*
15	*Bob Saget (Danny Tanner). Force-feed him equal parts laxative and broken glass, then tie him to a helicopter rotor and fly off to Cincinnati.*

1 After the Fantastic Four got shunted to a pocket dimension during that whole Onslaught fiasco, to whom did Nathan Richards entrust Reed and Sue Richards' son Franklin?
a) Alicia Masters
b) Banshee
c) Silver Surfer
d) He gave the kid 50 bucks, the keys to the Continental and told him to "go have a blast."

2 What's better than one Hulk comic book a month? Why, TWO Hulk comic books a month! What new title recently joined *The Incredible Hulk*?
a) *Rampaging Hulk*
b) *Grey Hulk*
c) *Tales of the Jade Giant*
d) *Ten Bucks Says This Doesn't Make it to Issue #12*

3 She's Shadowcat now, but Kitty Pryde's old *nom de super* used to be the following carbonated beverage:
a) Slice
b) Sprite
c) Surge
d) Dave

4 That star of *Akiko*, Akiko, has met a lot of strange characters in her journeys, but none so charming as that peg-legged rogue...
a) Spuckler
b) Stuckler
c) Sputter
d) Spitter, the Tobacco-Chawin' Trailer Trash

5 Gene Simmons' alter-ego is one bad dude in *KISS: The Psycho Circus*. In fact, he even has a super-scary name:
a) The Demon
b) The Ghoul
c) The Freak
d) Ken Starr

6 Foul villain! Who dared hold Tony Stark captive in *Iron Man* #6? Oh, that'd be in vol. 3, by the way. *Sigh*
a) Tutankhamen
b) Tuatara
c) Turpentine
d) Tupac Shakur

7 What car-type accessory did Iron Man have on his original armor?
a) An antenna to pick up radio transmissions
b) Air conditioning to keep him cool
c) Headlights to illuminate the darkness
d) Fuzzy dice hanging from the rear-view mirror, 'cause chicks dig that

8 Which one of Superman's childhood buddies grew up to become the villainous Conduit?
a) Pete Ross
b) Jimmy Olsen
c) Kenny Braverman
d) Kenny Baker

9 Holy continuity, Batman! Who was revealed to be Wolverine's secret wife in the landmark *Wolverine* #125?
a) Kitty Pryde
b) Jubilation Lee
c) Viper
d) "Secret wife"? I guess this blows the theory of "there's no such thing as a bad idea," eh?

10 What alternative cartoonist is also a writer for "The New Batman/Superman Adventures" cartoon?
a) Evan Dorkin
b) Matt Groening
c) Jeff Smith
d) Charles Schultz, master of the macabre

11 Kabuki's little pal who helped her bust outta that weird mental ward where she was being held is named:
a) Yukio
b) Mariko
c) Akemi
d) Margot Kidder

12 The first comic appearance of Jay and Silent Bob, the degenerates from the Kevin Smith movies, is:
a) *Oni Double Feature* #1
b) *Clerks* #1
c) *Jay & Silent Bob* #1
d) *Snootchie Bootchies* #1

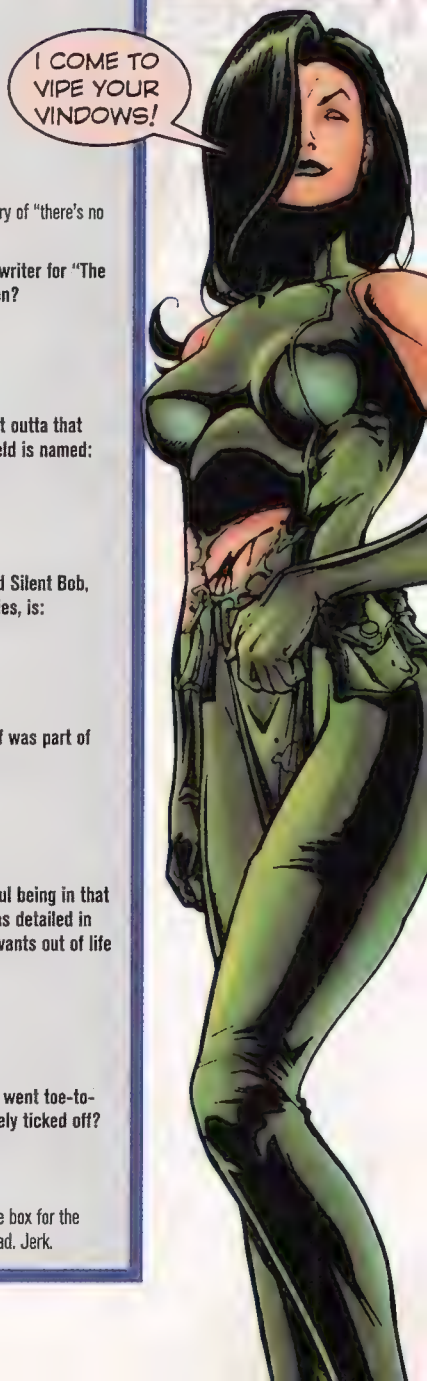
13 Which funny li'l Spider-Man knock-off was part of Marvel's kiddie-oriented Star Comics line?
a) Li'l Spidey
b) Spider-Girl
c) Peter Porker, the Spectacular Spider-Ham
d) Spider-Kid

14 Samaritan's perhaps the most powerful being in that superhero nexus known as Astro City. But as detailed in his first appearance, all the big guy really wants out of life is...
a) a shiny black Mustang convertible.
b) enough free time to fly around for fun.
c) a border collie puppy! Aww.
d) *Astro City* to come out on time.

15 The first time Spider-Man and Venom went toe-to-toe, what was it that got Spidey so supremely ticked off?
a) Venom scared the wits out of Mary Jane.
b) Venom roughed up Aunt May a bit.
c) Venom framed Spider-Man for murder.
d) Venom said he'd bring over the illegal cable box for the WCW pay-per-view, but went to the bar instead. Jerk.

ANSWERS

Candy-asses can peek on the next page if this is too tough...



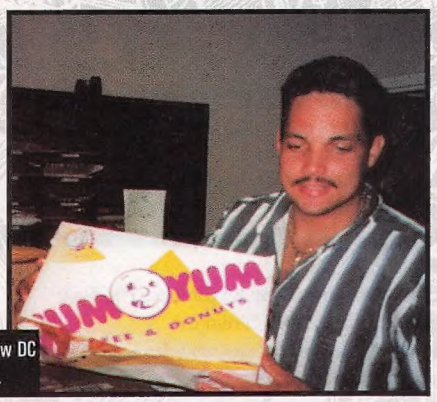
BULLPEN LOOK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

The Package

Odds were it was a bomb.

It was late afternoon one sweaty day in September when the four colorfully wrapped boxes arrived from the West Coast bearing the return signature of superstar artist Jim Lee. Fearing the worst (seeing how we've stolen his hotel robe twice and take pot-shots at his company at every opportunity), we had Wizard's warehouse manager, and inhuman colossus, Gedalias Donato open 'em in case they burst into flame or exploded or anything.

So, what lurked within the mysterious wrappings? DONUTS! Yes, God's most perfect food is what the esteemed and newly dubbed "Wizard's Favorite Artist" Jim Lee had sent us, dozens and dozens of donuts! Creme-filled, chocolate ones with an indiscernible yet tasty topping...and all because Jim digs *Wizard* and happened to be in a good mood. "Now THIS is a way to ensure good press," *Wizard* editor Brian Cunningham said between bulging mouthfuls of doughy goodness. "In fact, we're implementing a 'no cheap-shot jokes at Jim Lee's expense' program here at *Wizard* from now–wait...what was the Bullpen Top 10 this month?"



DOUGH NUTS Jim Lee uses his new DC corporate card to buy us off in pastries.

TOP 10 repercussions of DC buying WildStorm

10 Better paper, same WildStorm quality.
9 The Rainmaker/Catwoman one-shot *Locker Room Trouble at the Tennis Tournament* sells 1.8 million copies.
8 Alan Moore gets to quit DC a second time.
7 DV8 #1,000,000.
6 JLA now to guest star in about 15 MORE books a month.
5 Detective Chimp leads StormWatch to greatness.
4 New *Crisis on Even More Infinite Earths* consolidates WildStorm into the DCU only to have Mark Waid undo it several years from now because he misses crap like "Earth II."
3 Less thinly veiled ass-crack shots in shower, beach and refrigerator-repair scenes.
2 Now when *Wizard* steals Jim Lee's robe, we're really stealing DC's robe.
1 *Young WildC.A.T.s in Love.*

CBIQ answers...

1. B 4. A 7. A 10. A 13. C
2. A 5. A 8. C 11. C 14. B
3. B 6. B 9. C 12. A 15. A

ONE OF THE DAMNED

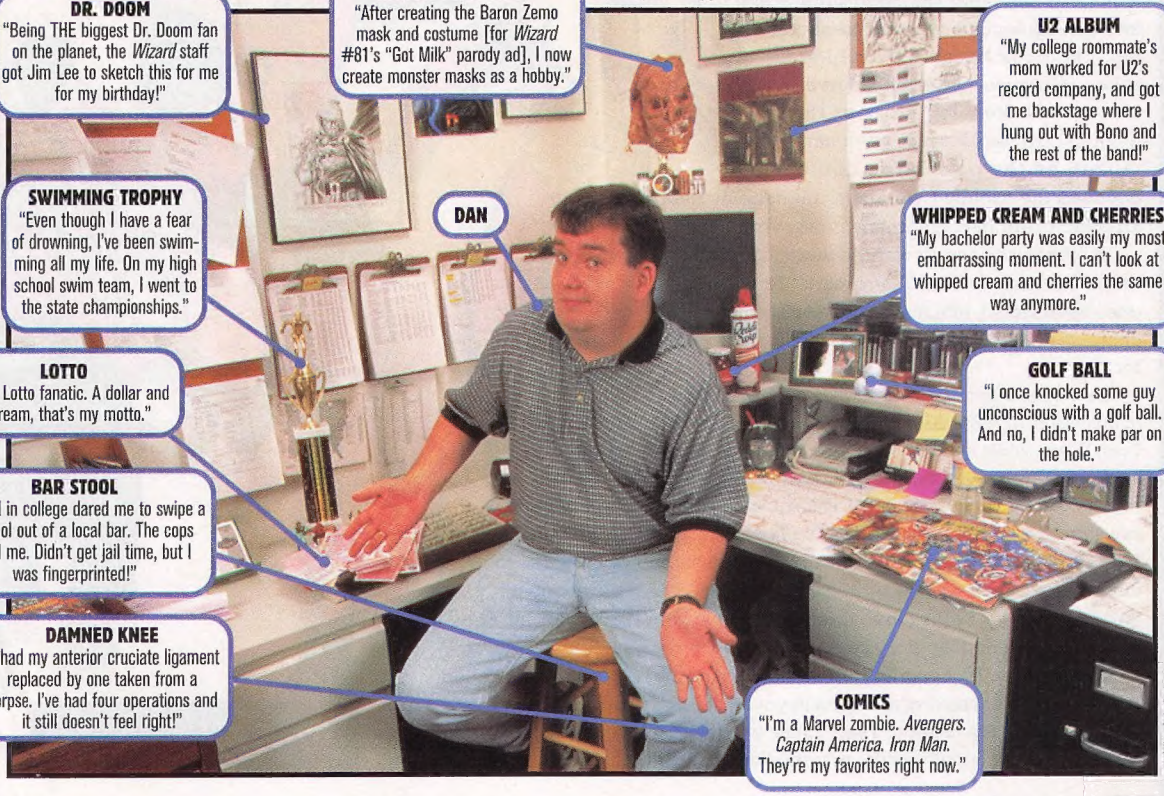
DOING HARD TIME

Dan Reilly RESEARCH EDITOR

WHY WE PAY HIM: "I coordinate gathering all the artwork and materials used in each Wizard Entertainment magazine. I'm kinda like Mr. Phelps from 'Mission Impossible,' except I have no choice but to take the mission! My favorite *Wizard* section is 'Casting Call,' because I run the meetings."

BEST OUT-OF-CONTEXT QUOTE: "This job kicked the fanboy right outta my ass." (In reference to how even comic books can become work.)

MOST BIZARRE *WIZARD* MOMENT: "Besides my bachelor's party [see whipped cream and cherries entry below], it's when *Wizard* editor-in-chief Pat McCallum once came up and hugged me, then left. I still don't know why."



DR. DOOM
"Being THE biggest Dr. Doom fan on the planet, the *Wizard* staff got Jim Lee to sketch this for me for my birthday!"

BARON ZEMO MASK
"After creating the Baron Zemo mask and costume [for *Wizard* #81's "Got Milk" parody ad], I now create monster masks as a hobby."

U2 ALBUM
"My college roommate's mom worked for U2's record company, and got me backstage where I hung out with Bono and the rest of the band!"

SWIMMING TROPHY
"Even though I have a fear of drowning, I've been swimming all my life. On my high school swim team, I went to the state championships."

DAN

WHIPPED CREAM AND CHERRIES
"My bachelor party was easily my most embarrassing moment. I can't look at whipped cream and cherries the same way anymore."

LOTTO
"I'm a Lotto fanatic. A dollar and a dream, that's my motto."

GOLF BALL
"I once knocked some guy unconscious with a golf ball. And no, I didn't make par on the hole."

BAR STOOL
"A friend in college dared me to swipe a bar stool out of a local bar. The cops busted me. Didn't get jail time, but I was fingerprinted!"

DAMNED KNEE
"I had my anterior cruciate ligament replaced by one taken from a corpse. I've had four operations and it still doesn't feel right!"

COMICS
"I'm a Marvel zombie. *Avengers. Captain America. Iron Man.* They're my favorites right now."

PHOTOS: PAUL SCHRAUB

TIME TRAVEL by RUSSELL LISSAU

SPLASH OF THE TITANS

DC challenged Marvel with 'The New Teen Titans' 18 years ago

Marv Wolfman knew he had a hit on his hands.

By 1980, DC Comics was playing runner-up to Marvel at the cash register and needed to jump-start its sagging line, which had been drastically slashed two years before. Wolfman, a recent arrival at DC after years as a writer and editor at Marvel, thought reviving the Teen Titans—a group of sidekicks who had their own series in the 1960s and 1970s—was the answer. Only one problem stood in his way: DC executives disagreed. Strongly.

"They thought it was very juvenile," Wolfman remembers, when he pitched *The New Teen Titans*. "But I had all the characters worked out, and I said, 'Trust me.'"

Wolfman had worked briefly on the original Titans series, and he was confident his new Titans would give DC a badly needed transfusion of young blood. He cemented the deal by bringing aboard popular artist George Pérez, who had proven an ability to handle team books with *The Avengers* and had just begun working on *Justice League of America*.

So it came to pass in November 1980 that seven young heroes—Robin, Kid Flash, Wonder Girl, Changeling, Raven, Cyborg and Starfire—joined forces to fight an army of lizard-faced aliens. *The New Teen Titans* #1 also set the stage for the introduction in the next issue of the group's arch-enemy, Deathstroke the Terminator.

The New Teen Titans debuted with fabulous sales, and after six months the series found a regular audience that kept growing. The book became DC's biggest seller, going toe-to-toe with Marvel's *Uncanny X-Men* for most of the decade. DC and Marvel even capitalized on the popularity contest between the groups by teaming them up in 1982 for a then-rare inter-company crossover.

Wolfman believes it was the depth of the characters that set *New Teen Titans* apart. "They weren't one-dimensional, like many of the other superhero characters at the time," he says. "They resonated for me."

New Teen Titans went through several transformations in the 1980s. In 1984, the series changed its title to *Tales of the Teen Titans*, while another *New Teen Titans* was relaunched to be sold only through comic stores. (*Tales* would later convert into a reprint book for its sister title.) The franchise would broaden with two short-lived series, *Teen Titans Spotlight* in 1986 and *Team Titans* in 1992. But the Titans boom eventually came to an end in 1995 due to three factors: over-exposure, an aging roster and Pérez's final departure in the early '90s (he took a three-year hiatus from 1985-1988), all of which weakened the story content. DC tried to recapture the magic with a new *Teen Titans* series in 1996 starring mostly new heroes, but failed.

The publisher hasn't given up on its young heroes, though. After a *JLA/Titans* mini-series this fall, the original Teen Titans will make a long-awaited comeback this January in a new monthly title, proving that the kids are indeed all right.

DATELINE

NOVEMBER 1980

Martin Scorsese's classic film "**Raging Bull**," starring Robert De Niro as boxer Jake LaMotta, opened in theaters....TV viewers tuned in to find out who shot J.R. on "**Dallas**"....Kenny Rogers topped the charts for six weeks with "**Lady**"....**Ronald Reagan** was elected the 40th president of the United States.

DeNIRO

TEEN BEAT *The New Teen Titans* saved a desperate DC Comics in 1980.

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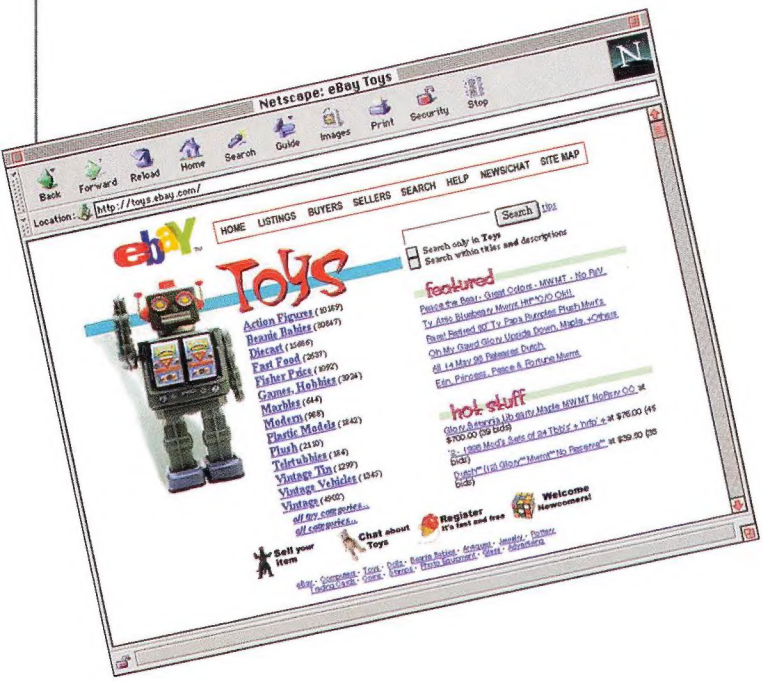

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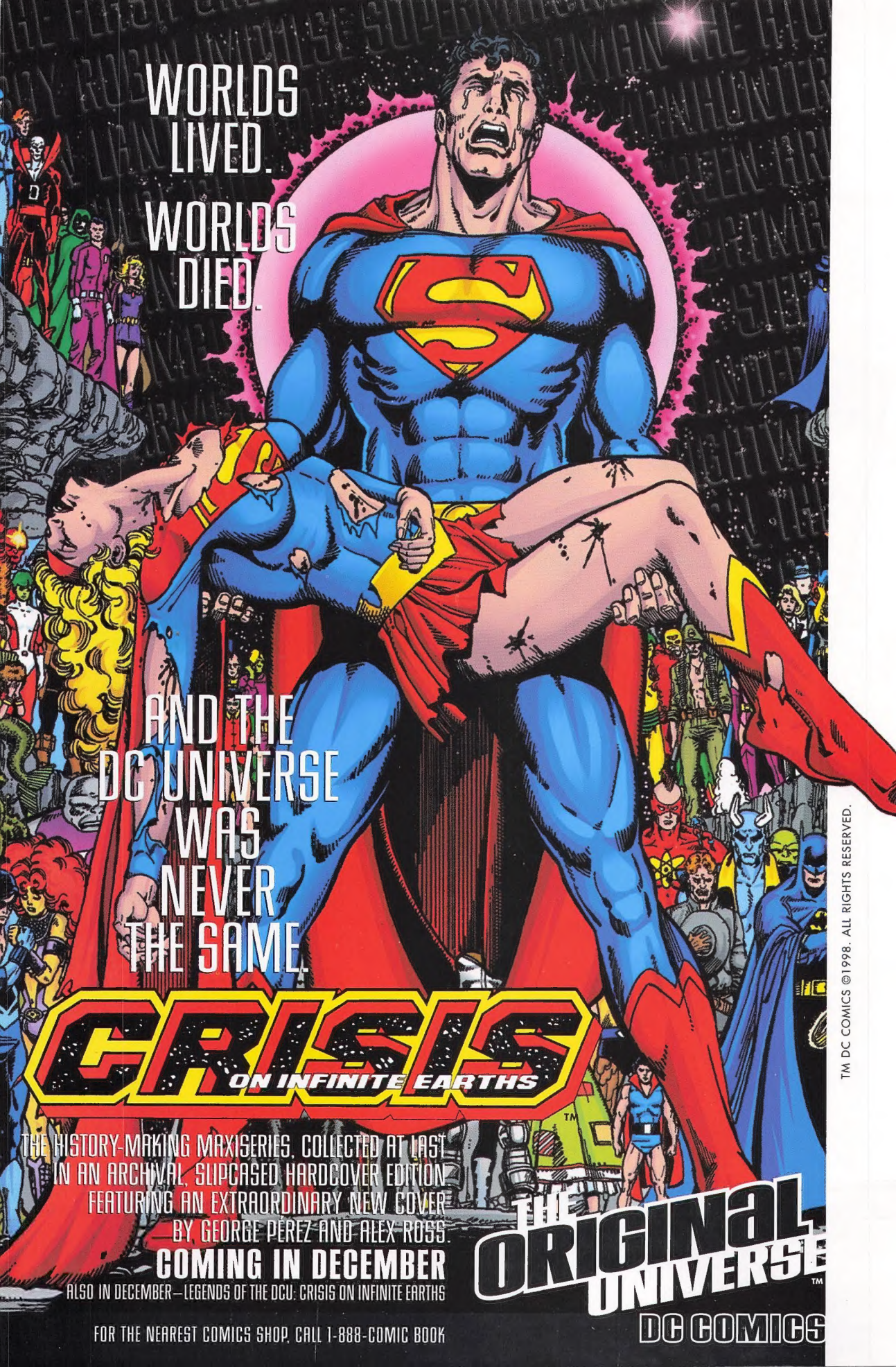
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